

Inspection of a good school: Biddick Hall Infants' School

Galsworthy Road, Biddick Hall County Infant School, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 9JD

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2022

Outcome

Biddick Hall Infants' School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The three school rules of 'stay safe, show respect and achieve' underpin everything that happens in this school. The 'Biddick way' is embedded in every classroom. Pupils talk about the importance of treating everyone equally. They know how to be a good friend. They say that they feel happy and safe in school and know that they can talk to trusted adults if they have any worries. Bullying is not a problem in this school. Pupils say that if it were to happen, adults would deal with it quickly. Pupils behave well in lessons. At playtimes, they take part in a range of activities, such as reading in the new reading shed.

Leaders plan opportunities for pupils to have a rich set of experiences. This helps them with learning the curriculum. For example, some pupils recently travelled to the local town using the bus and ferry to enhance their learning in geography.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils in their school. There is a strong focus on working with parents to help them understand the importance of pupils attending school regularly. Initiatives such as 'dream big' help pupils to think about what types of career path they might like to follow when they are older.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum with real consideration of the school's context at heart. Some subjects are more developed than others.

Leaders understand that learning to read needs to be a priority. They know that this will better enable pupils to access the curriculum. Staff deliver their phonics programme effectively. Pupils' read books which closely match the sounds that they know. Skilled support staff help any pupils who are struggling with learning to read to catch up. The programme used in Nursery helps prepare children for formal phonics teaching when they start in Reception.

Pupils and teachers talk enthusiastically about books and reading. Leaders have invested in quality texts that support pupils' enjoyment of reading as well as their wider development. For example, books have been deliberately chosen to support pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures. In the early years, children have opportunities to vote for the books that they would like teachers to read to them. They listen intently to these stories and can answer questions about what they have heard. Leaders have worked hard to develop a positive reading culture within the school. There are plans in place to develop this culture further by working more closely with parents.

Leaders have made careful choices about the programmes that are used to teach mathematics. Teachers deliver these programmes with consistency. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop quick recall of number facts and to solve problems. There are lots of chances for pupils to revisit prior learning. This helps them to remember and build on what they have previously learned. In the early years, there are lots of mathematics focused activities available to children.

Some activities that pupils complete in mathematics do not match the learning objective of the lesson. Similarly, in subjects such as history and geography, activities do not always match the subject being taught. Where this happens, pupils do not learn the important knowledge that they need in order to help them make progress. Teachers are unable to make accurate assessments of pupils' progress in a subject.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. The 'Rainbow Room' is a real asset. It enables pupils with SEND to access the curriculum in an environment that is suited to their needs. Children with SEND in the early years are identified quickly and appropriate support is put in place. Staff build positive relationships with families.

Leaders have thought carefully about pupils' wider development. In addition to a range of trips, there are opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in school. Pupils value the chance to be part of the school council or to be a playground buddy. They say that they enjoy attending the extra-curricular clubs that are on offer, such as judo, multi-skills sports and choir.

There is a culture of respect within the school. Leaders, governors and staff work closely together to achieve the best outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils and their families well. This means that personalised support can be put in place quickly for those who need it. Leaders make use of external agencies for support where necessary. Pupils can talk about some ways to keep themselves safe both online and offline. All staff and governors understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They have received recent training. The school maintains accurate records which show evidence of timely action being taken where concerns have been raised. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the right staff are recruited to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the tasks given to pupils in lessons do not match either the subject being taught or the learning objective. This means that pupils do not learn the precise knowledge that has been identified on curriculum plans. Leaders should ensure that teachers are sharply focused on what it is they expect pupils to have learned by the end of each lesson and that they plan lesson activities that will enable them to achieve this.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	108682
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10240739
Type of school	Community
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Beth Foster
Headteacher	Andrea Willis
Website	biddickhallinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club which is managed by school staff.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector visited a sample of history lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the leadership team. The inspector also met with subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair and other members of the governing body and the school improvement adviser from the local authority.

- The inspector observed pupils reading to familiar adults.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and during breaktimes.
- The inspector examined the single central record and looked at how safeguarding incidents are reported. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included any free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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