

# Inspection of Otterburn Primary School

Otterburn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE19 1JF

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Otterburn's 'blossom tree' epitomises the school's happy atmosphere. Teachers select pupils who have worked hard to have their name on a piece of 'blossom' attached to the tree. Pupils select a friend who has acted kindly to be a 'leaf'. Pupils show pride in this being a welcoming school for new pupils. Pupils show respect for their friends and teachers. Assemblies celebrate the school values such as respect and diversity. Pupils know it is 'okay to be different'.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard, and they do. Pupils aspire to great things. Behaviour in and out of class is good. Pupils take pride in staying on the 'green light' of the behaviour system and they know what happens if they move on to a 'red light'. This hardly ever happens. Pupils cannot recall any episodes of bullying. They know that teachers will intervene if there was any bullying. Pupils feel safe because they trust each other and their teachers.

Pupils display a competitive edge. They enjoy showing this in games like tag rugby. Pupils vie to win the weekly house points trophy. They strive to be pupil of the week. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about their outdoor learning, including sitting around a firepit to toast marshmallows. Pupils help to make the school run smoothly. 'Sports leaders' set out equipment and play games with younger pupils at break and lunchtimes. The 'pupil parliament' suggests improvements such as new playground equipment. It organises coffee mornings to raise money for good causes.

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

Leaders and governors have secured significant improvements in school. Leaders have focused on improving the provision in English and mathematics. Following a period of turbulence and change, the school team has pulled together to bring about stability in staffing. The governing body responded quickly to strengthen school leadership and initiate improvement. There is a growing sense of teamwork and positive morale among the staff. Parents and carers are equally positive about the school's recent successes.

Leaders have developed an effective curriculum in most subjects. In some subjects, curriculum subject leaders have identified the essential knowledge pupils need. Leaders have sequenced learning so that knowledge builds progressively. Teachers are clear about what pupils have already been taught and what to teach next. Teachers make checks on what pupils know and understand. This helps them to plan future learning. Key ideas thread through learning. Pupils connect new knowledge to what they already know. However, leaders have not developed all curriculum subjects to this high standard.

Leaders have trained staff well to teach the phonics curriculum. Teachers make sure that lessons follow the same routine. Pupils learn new sounds each day and use

these to read words. Staff give pupils books that help them to practise their phonic skills. Pupils read and understand these books with confidence. This helps them to become fluent readers. Teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons. Pupils receive help to keep up with their peers if needed. All pupils enjoy reading each day. Leaders have expanded and improved the school library. A love of books and reading is evident across the school.

Teachers in the early years are also well trained to teach in each area of learning with expertise. They model and explain what children need to do. For example, how to use their tongues and teeth to make new phonic sounds. Teachers support independent play effectively. Most of what children do when learning inside and outside supports them to acquire basic knowledge and skills that they need. However, some of the activities to improve children's physical development are limited. Children have too few opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills, particularly outside.

Leaders state clearly that their aim is to include everyone. They want all pupils to reach their full potential and achieve as much as they can. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have high aspirations for these pupils. They expect positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour in lessons. This is uniformly the case. The curriculum is the same for everyone, including pupils with SEND. A range of adaptations are there if needed. These include visual timetables, word banks and changes to how they record work.

Leaders take into account the school's isolated and rural context when planning activities to address pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoyed a range of visits prior to COVID-19. These are due to restart. Pupils were involved with music, the arts, local museums, stately homes and local landmarks. These build pupils' appreciation of their local heritage, its importance and beauty. Leaders celebrate pupils' achievements out of school. Discussions and debates in class cover issues from around the world. These include race, religion, disability and differences, including in types of families. Pupils have a growing understanding of democracy, tolerance and respect.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding training for all staff and governors is relevant and up to date. Staff know how to spot even the smallest issue that could be a concern. They record all incidents, and safeguarding leaders deal with each situation immediately. Leaders secure the help that pupils and families need without delay.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online. They learn about passwords and reporting suspicious online activity. Pupils are also aware of the necessity of safe relationships. They know how to be safe near roads or on a bike.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some curriculum subjects. In these subjects, the main ideas that link substantive knowledge together lack clarity. Pupils are unable to connect learning or build on what they already know. Leaders must continue their work on curriculum structure so that pupils know more, can do more and remember more in every subject.
- Children in the early years have too limited opportunities for physical development throughout the environment. This is hindering the development of their fine and gross motor skills. Leaders should ensure that there are more regular, and planned, opportunities for children in the early years to access activities that help them to develop physically, including when they are outside.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122215
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241000
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Dave Cookson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Worrall (Interim)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.otterburn.northumberland.sch.uk">www.otterburn.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher left her role in the summer term of 2022.
- An interim headteacher was appointed and took up her position in September 2022. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed and is due to take up her role in January 2023.
- The school is no longer part of the River Rede Federation.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, the early years leader and other school staff. An

inspector met four members of the local governing body, including the chairperson. An inspector also met a school improvement partner from Northumberland local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history, computing and mathematics.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at break time and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school.
- An inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire were considered, including some free-text comments.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. The inspectors considered the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Hodgkiss

Ofsted Inspector

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