

Inspection of Bloemfontein Primary School

The Middles, Craghead, Stanley, County Durham DH9 6AG

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of the curriculum that pupils receive does not prepare them well enough for their next steps. Pupils do not get off to the start that they need in reading or writing. This limits their ability to progress through the wider curriculum. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Children do not achieve well enough in the early years. While children settle into steady routines in Nursery, this does not happen as well in Reception. Children do not learn how to concentrate and focus on their learning and play. The expectations for their learning and behaviour are not clearly established.

Leaders have built an atmosphere where pupils are happy in school. They enjoy coming to school and say that bullying does not happen. Leaders provide pupils with many positive trips and experiences that widen their horizons.

Staff encourage most pupils to continue to improve their behaviour as they move through school. Older pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and rise to the high expectations set by their teachers.

Staff provide pupils with a range of experiences that enrich their time at school. In addition to well-planned visits and visitors into school, pupils experience outdoor learning activities that build teamwork and confidence. Leaders provide pupils with a free breakfast club every day to ensure that pupils have a good start to their day. Parents and carers appreciate the care that their children receive.

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

Leaders do a great deal to support pupils' well-being and to enhance their personal development. They have secured good attendance for pupils. Pupils value school and the wider experiences on offer. However, actions to support these aspects have not been reflected in actions taken to develop the quality of education that pupils experience.

Children get off to too slow a start with reading in Reception. Early reading is not taught effectively, and pupils' misconceptions are not addressed. Many pupils do not correctly form the letters of the sounds they are learning when they write them. These errors are not always identified or corrected. This continues to be a problem in key stage 1. Teachers do not consistently make sure that pupils read books or work in phonic groups that are matched to their needs. This means that some pupils are held back in their reading while others read books that are too difficult for them.

Leaders have planned out some of the knowledge and skills that pupils need to be taught. In mathematics, teachers break down what pupils need into smaller steps.

However, in too many other subjects, leaders have not thought about how knowledge is taught so that pupils remember more over time. Teachers are not clear on how to do this. Pupils cannot connect what they are being taught with what they already know. In history, pupils can recall some important moments, but they do not fully understand how these link together. Too many pupils do not access the curriculum as intended. The weaknesses in the teaching of reading are limiting some pupils' access to the wider curriculum.

Teachers do not use assessment to consistent effect to check what pupils know and can do. This results in some pupils being moved on too quickly in their learning and others not quickly enough. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged when they produce work of poor quality or work that shows poor understanding of the subject.

The support for pupils with SEND is too variable. Leaders do not ensure that support plans for pupils with SEND map out what staff need to do to help them clearly enough. This means that some pupils with SEND do not get the help that they need in order to progress through the curriculum. Some pupils with SEND get frustrated and lose focus. Staff, including leaders, then have to spend considerable time to get them back on track.

Pupils are positive about their school life and say that they feel safe. Parents and carers agree. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and know who they can talk to in school. Leaders, including trust leaders, are successfully addressing issues around attendance. Attendance has improved significantly. Leaders have targeted their support to families, who now better understand the importance of pupils being in school. The attendance of many pupils has risen.

The early years curriculum is not planned or implemented well. The effective routines in Nursery do not carry through to Reception. Some staff do not have a clear understanding of the curriculum and so do not design appropriate activities to enable children to learn and develop. Basic provision, such as access to snacks and appropriate places to rest, are not always available. Too many children remain too far behind by the end of Reception in their early speaking, reading and writing. They then struggle to catch up.

Staff know which pupils need extra support with their well-being. Staff do what they can to support and encourage pupils to 'have a go' and to build their resilience. Staff know that for some pupils, this is particularly difficult. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that the school gives them, such as trips and visitors. Leaders know how important it is to broaden the experiences and expectations of pupils, in order to raise aspirations for all. Pupils have curriculum experiences that help them to better understand how to contribute positively to society. They are taught through planned opportunities that discrimination is not acceptable. Staff do not tolerate bullying in any form.

Governors are involved in the life of the school. They assure aspects of the school's work on behalf of trustees. Governors supported leaders well during the COVID-19 pandemic and are mindful of staff workload. Governors understand their role in

overseeing safeguarding, but some of their assurance work is not thorough enough. For example, they do not seek reassurance on how well leaders record safeguarding and behaviour incidents so that they can reflect on and analyse any patterns effectively. Trustees do not have a clear enough picture of the impact of school improvement strategies. Trustees and governors are aware of many of the challenges that school leaders face but have not ensured that swift and effective action is taken when needed. The trust has provided a range of necessary support. Trustees recognise that this needs to continue for the school to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are well supported. Leaders work closely with a range of agencies to help keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that necessary checks on the suitability of staff are made and recorded. Staff have been appropriately trained and are aware of risks pupils may face.

Trustees are knowledgeable about potential risks of harm within the local community. They have accessed relevant safeguarding training and know their responsibilities. However, trustees do not have sufficiently accurate information on aspects of behaviour and safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure that children have access to a consistently high-quality curriculum in the early years. As a result, children do not acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours to make them ready for the next stage in their education. Leaders should work with staff to improve the teaching of the curriculum in early years so that children are better prepared for key stage 1.
- The teaching of early reading is not effective. As a result, too many pupils do not make adequate progress and cannot read well enough. Leaders need to ensure that the teaching of early reading significantly improves so that pupils can make the rapid progress that they need.
- In some subjects, the knowledge that pupils should be taught is not sequenced or taught in ways that help pupils to remember. Some pupils do not access a sufficiently broad curriculum. This means that pupils' learning in the wider curriculum is variable and, in some cases, limited. Leaders need to work with subject leaders and the wider staff team to enable all pupils to better learn the wider curriculum, particularly in foundation subjects.
- Support plans for pupils with SEND do not map out clearly enough the small steps that these pupils need to take to make progress through the curriculum. The

support that they need is not targeted precisely enough to help them to learn the knowledge and skills to be successful. Leaders should ensure that staff receive better guidance on how to support pupils with SEND. This will help pupils with SEND to learn more over time.

- Leaders and trustees have been too slow to respond to the weaknesses in the school. Leaders recognise that the quality of education provided is not good enough. Leaders should take swift and determined action to ensure that these weaknesses are addressed effectively so that pupils get a much better quality of education.
- Trustees and leaders have not ensured that the climate for safeguarding is as robust as it should be. For example, safeguarding records do not fully reflect the actions taken to keep pupils safe. All those with responsibility for safeguarding should ensure that records fully capture the actions that have taken place to keep pupils safe. This will help leaders to better monitor pupils' welfare and identify any patterns of concern.

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	145983
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10240615
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Mrs T Davinson
Headteacher	Laura Liddell
Website	http://www.bloemfontein.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened a nursery in April 2021. A small number of places are available for two-year olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the CEO of the Stanley Learning Partnership Trust and other leaders from the school.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the Trust, the chair of the governing body and other members of the governing body.
- During the inspection, we focused our activities on early reading, mathematics, history and art and design. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors looked at individual support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and talked to pupils, staff, governors and the CEO about safeguarding. Safeguarding and behaviour records were checked along with recruitment checks on the single central record.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with staff and considered responses to a staff survey.

Inspection team

Kate Byrne, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Dawn Foster

Ofsted Inspector

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