

Inspection of a good school: Hotspur Primary School

Mowbray Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE6 5PA

Inspection date: 25 and 26 January 2023

Outcome

Hotspur Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Hotspur benefit from a wide range of cultural experiences. Pupils from all different backgrounds enjoy taking part in the performing arts. Pupils learn from and work alongside professional artists. Pupils have unique opportunities to express their views and influence others, including world leaders. Their 'Climate Change Catastrophe' film was shown at United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow in 2021.

Leaders are passionate that all pupils have the best possible start to their education. Staff know all pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and adapt the teaching to meet individual needs.

Relationships between pupils, parents and staff are very positive. Pupils feel safe. The pastoral team, made up of specialist support staff, helps pupils express their feelings. Pupils trust the adults and share their concerns with them. This means they can focus more fully on their learning. Bullying sometimes happens, but pupils are confident that adults deal promptly with any issues or concerns.

Children in early years get off to a flying start. The high level of interaction between staff and children encourages their confidence. Children eagerly take part in lessons which are designed to be active and purposeful in delivering the curriculum.

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

The new senior leadership team is determined that all pupils and staff achieve to the best of their abilities. They encourage subject leaders to share ideas and lead improvement. Teachers work together when planning and they share best practice. This helps the early career teachers to grow in confidence and skill. Teachers make good use of assessment to check what pupils know at the beginning and end of topics.

Leaders prioritise reading and have recently introduced a highly structured phonics programme. Staff are well trained, and there is a consistent teaching approach from

Reception onwards. The books that pupils take home are matched to the sounds they are learning in school. However, a significant number of pupils are not ready for the key stage 2 curriculum, because they have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders attribute this to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Phonics teaching is not closing the gaps quickly enough for some pupils. The way in which the phonics teaching is organised leads to some pupils missing lessons in other subjects. Teachers introduce pupils to a rich variety of books. These books challenge the most-able readers.

In mathematics, staff have strong subject knowledge. Teachers know pupils well and adapt the curriculum to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils appreciate the time teachers set aside to recap on prior learning. Pupils confidently recall learning from previous topics. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and correct any misconceptions.

Leaders recognised that the curriculum could be even more ambitious in some subjects, such as art. Revised curriculum planning, introduced this academic year, includes subject-specific concepts and vocabulary. Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum, which is rooted in the local context. The delivery of the revised curriculum is still in its infancy.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Leaders work with parents and services to provide pupils with the support that they need. Well-developed plans are in place to help pupils learn alongside their peers.

The early years staff make sure that children can independently access all areas of the curriculum. They constantly model social skills such as turn-taking and sharing. In Nursery, the older children enjoy looking after those who are younger. They are comfortable and confident in school.

Pupils, including the youngest in school, show positive attitudes towards learning. They are well behaved in class and during playtimes. Following the pandemic, pupils' attendance is improving. Leaders are tenacious in following up pupil absence. They work with families to highlight the importance of coming to school.

Leaders are adept at making the most of opportunities for pupils. There is an impressive personal development programme. Leaders encourage pupils to develop a strong sense of social justice. Leaders ensure that after-school clubs build on pupils' unique talents. Pupils are active citizens in the wider community. They have opportunities to perform in local theatres. Pupils' work is displayed in public exhibitions. Pupils are proud of their various leadership roles, such as 'eco-warriors' and 'art ambassadors'.

Members of the governing body support and challenge the new leadership team. They ensure that senior leaders continue the rich traditions of the school and work towards academic improvements. Staff morale is high. They appreciate the consideration of their views and the opportunities for further training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are quick to respond to any pupil who is at risk of harm. The pastoral team is highly supportive of pupils and families. Parents and pupils are confident in reporting any concerns to them. Leaders challenge external partners to ensure that the safeguarding needs of the pupils are met without delay.

Safeguarding is woven through the curriculum. Pupils learn how to assess risk and to keep themselves safe. This includes online and real-life situations, such as road safety.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding when recruiting staff. They ensure that staff are well trained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some differences in how rapidly pupils are learning phonics within certain cohorts. This means that some pupils in key stage 2 do not read fluently. Leaders should further develop their existing strategies to ensure that pupils who need to catch up quickly with their peers in phonics do so.
- In some of the wider curriculum areas, some specific subject vocabulary and the underlying concepts were not taught until the curriculum was redesigned. This means that some pupils do not know and understand some specific concepts. Leaders should continue to embed the revised subject curriculums, monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and make further amendments where necessary.

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 February 2014.

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	108491
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10255869
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jon Bryan
Headteacher	Kevin McVittie
Website	www.hotspurprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher commenced their post in January 2021.
- The leadership team has been recently restructured and expanded.
- Hotspur is part of the Ouseburn Learning Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers and some support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.

- The lead inspector carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the lead inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The lead inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. The lead inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. The lead inspector spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector spoke to pupils about their views of the school and considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and Ofsted Parent View. Staff's views were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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