

Inspection of a good school: Catchgate Primary School

Blackett Street, Stanley, County Durham DH9 8LX

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2023

Outcome

Catchgate Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Daily life at Catchgate Primary School is underpinned by a strong focus on well-being. Leaders have created a culture of acceptance and respect. Pupils are taught how to recognise and understand their emotions. Pupils are proud of their roles as well-being 'warriors'. They take this responsibility seriously. Pupils look after each other. Parents and carers appreciate being part of this welcoming community. Pupils are safe and happy here.

Pupils know what bullying is and what they should do if it happens. Pupils explain that they get clear and regular messages about why bullying is unacceptable. They are confident that adults would take bullying seriously. If it happens, they know that adults will sort it out.

Leaders are aspirational for the future of their pupils. This is particularly evident in the focus on careers throughout the curriculum. Even the youngest children learn about the world of work. Older pupils learn about the full range of pathways and options open to them. Pupils engage with a wide range of external visitors who come to the school to discuss their careers. Leaders understand the importance of pupils having these experiences so that they can aim high.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and suited to their pupils. Each half term, all pupils begin their learning with a memorable experience. These experiences help them link their learning to the world beyond the classroom. Pupils enjoy learning about local history. They learn about important historical figures, such as miners, from their local community. Pupils also value their forest school lessons, where they focus on teamwork and life skills.

Leaders have made reading a recent focus in school. A new phonics scheme has been introduced and is embedded. Staff are well trained to ensure they deliver this scheme effectively. Children in the early years get off to a strong start in reading. They enjoy sharing books and talking about the books they like. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge effectively to read well-matched books. Pupils who find reading more difficult are given additional support to help them catch up. There is a number of older pupils who still have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Although leaders have put additional support in place for these pupils, these gaps are not being closed quickly enough. Leaders have previously identified this, and plans are already in place to address this.

Across individual subjects, leaders have carefully considered what they want pupils to learn. They have organised the curriculum logically, paying close attention to how pupils will build on what they already know. Leaders have outlined the most important knowledge. Teachers use retrieval tasks at the beginning of lessons to check what pupils have remembered.

Leaders have redesigned their mathematics curriculum following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that pupils have a secure grasp of the basics and that gaps are filled. Teachers use assessment to carefully track exactly what pupils know and can do. The impact of this is evident in pupils' work. Despite the curriculum being well considered, pupils are not routinely getting enough opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and informed. They understand how to meet the range of needs that pupils arrive with. Parents of pupils with SEND particularly appreciate the support their children receive. Pupils with SEND are well supported across the curriculum to ensure they experience success alongside their peers. They access the same curriculum and receive additional support where necessary. Staff carefully consider how to offer this support while also building pupils' independence.

Pupils behave well in school. The atmosphere in classrooms is calm and purposeful. Pupils are engaged in their learning. Any disruption is addressed by adults quickly. A clear behaviour policy is in place, and pupils understand what is expected of them. These high expectations are supported by a culture where pupils are encouraged to recognise and manage their own behaviour and emotions. Children in the early years cooperate and work together. They remind each other about sharing and taking turns.

Pupils learn important messages outside their academic subjects. Pupils talk clearly about equality and diversity. They learn about respect and the importance of treating everyone fairly. Leaders make sure that these messages are aligned with situations pupils will experience outside of school.

Governors are closely involved with the life of the school. They have a clear vision for the school they want Catchgate to be. Staff feel supported by leaders. They believe their workload and their well-being are considered. Staff are proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils trust the adults in school to help them and keep them safe. They are confident to share any worries with adults. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. They also learn about risks they might face outside of school. Staff are also well trained in how to identify these risks.

Leaders have clear systems in place to make sure that any concerns are shared and acted upon swiftly. Leaders carefully monitor pupils who are more vulnerable. Detailed logs are kept of actions taken to keep pupils safe. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure pupils and families get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Gaps exist in some older pupils' phonics knowledge. This has an impact on their experiences across the curriculum when they need to read text to access learning. Leaders have identified this and have put provision in place. There are plans in place to strengthen this provision further. Leaders should ensure that older pupils' phonics gaps are closed to ensure they are confident and competent readers.
- Pupils do not routinely get enough chances to problem solve in mathematics. This means they do not get enough opportunities to practise and develop their reasoning skills. Leaders should ensure that there are regular opportunities for all pupils to problem solve in mathematics.

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 October 2012.

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	114023
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255818
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Whitehead
Headteacher	Joanne Shaw
Website	www.catchgate.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with representatives from the governing body, including the chair. They also spoke with the leadership adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinators. They checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons. They spoke with a range

of pupils with SEND throughout the inspection. The inspector also scrutinised a range of documentation regarding provision for pupils with SEND.

- The inspector spoke to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding in school. They checked logs of actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector checked the single central record and documentation relating to safer recruitment.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils at social times and during lessons.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for the wider development of pupils and relationships education.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff and pupil survey. They also considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and additional communications from parents.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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