

# Inspection of a good school: West Rainton Primary School

West Rainton, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH4 6RN

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Inspection date: 8 February 2023

## **Outcome**

West Rainton Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils feel at home at West Rainton Primary School. It is a small school with a strong culture of inclusivity. Pupils work well together in lessons. Pupils from different year groups get on well with one another. They support each other with learning. Everyone is made to feel welcome. Bullying is extremely rare and when it does occur, leaders work swiftly to ensure that pupils resolve their differences.

Classrooms are purposeful and calm. Teachers expect the best of their pupils. In return, pupils appreciate their teachers. One pupil commented, 'I don't think of teachers like a boss. I think of them like a helper.' The warmth between staff and pupils is obvious to visitors. Pupils feel safe because they trust the adults in school.

Much work is done to give pupils access to rich cultural experiences. For example, pupils benefit from visiting the theatre to watch plays by Shakespeare. They talk passionately about playing roles in their own school productions. Nearly all pupils attend an after-school club. Pupils can choose from an impressive array of extra-curricular activities. Staff enjoy running these clubs.

Leaders place great importance on pupils being involved in the local community. There are strong links with a local residential home. Pupils of all ages have benefited from visiting the home and interacting with the residents. This gives pupils valuable chances to be active citizens within the local community.

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

There is clarity in leaders' vision for the school. They have designed a well-considered curriculum that develops pupils' academic knowledge as well as ensuring that pupils gain valuable cultural experiences to broaden their horizons. Parents rightly hold the school in high esteem. All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, and who spoke to inspectors, would recommend the school.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for their next step in education. This is equally as true in the early years, where leaders are clear on what it is that children should learn and when they should learn it. In the Nursery, staff are attentive to children's needs. They ensure that children are well prepared to begin Reception.

Older pupils benefit from a rigorous curriculum. Teachers support all pupils to make progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils with SEND have language and communication needs. Leaders have ensured that staff in school have been trained to understand how to best meet these needs. Teachers are given sufficient information to make the right lesson adaptations for pupils with SEND.

Governors have strong oversight of the quality of education. For example, their challenge has led leaders to develop the mathematics curriculum so that it is more ambitious than it once was. This is paying dividends. Pupils have an impressive knowledge of mathematics. They remember the taught curriculum. The wider curriculum is equally well designed. Subject leaders are well supported by senior leaders to develop the curriculum in their subjects. Effective training has helped subject leaders to ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced. It is clear how pupils' knowledge builds over time. Pupils' recall of knowledge is strong. However, sometimes they find it hard to explain some of the concepts that leaders want them to know in some subjects. This is because not all teachers pinpoint the most important knowledge to revisit over time. While assessment is used well to check pupils' understanding in lessons, some of the checks that teachers do at the end of a unit of work are not as useful as they could be.

Pupils adore reading. This is because leaders have made inspired choices with the books that pupils read. Well-chosen texts ensure that pupils access ambitious novels across the school. Pupils' eyes light up when they talk about their favourite authors. Early reading is very well taught. The school's approach to phonics is well established. The small number of pupils who need extra help are given frequent opportunities to do more reading with adults. They catch up quickly.

Pupils conduct themselves well. Those with leadership responsibilities, such as members of the eco-council, are proud of their roles in school. Behaviour in lessons and around school is positive.

The school is proud of its place in the community. Pupils have a strong sense of their own individual role in supporting their local area. Various links to community organisations develop pupils' citizenship. Pupils are taught to understand the importance of respecting different faiths. Visits to places of worship, such as the local Gurdwara and Durham Cathedral, help pupils to deepen their knowledge of religions such as Sikhism and Christianity.

Staff speak highly of leaders. All staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey strongly agreed that the school is well led. Staff consistently talk about the team spirit in school. They are proud to work at the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have well-established systems to manage safeguarding. These help to keep pupils safe from harm. Staff access frequent training on safeguarding. This improves their knowledge of the risks that pupils might face, and what might indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders respond in a timely manner when staff pass on concerns about pupils. This includes, where relevant, appropriate contact with outside agencies.

Pupils have secure knowledge of how to stay safe. They are taught practical examples of how to stay safe online and how to react if a stranger approached them in the community.

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

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

- In some curriculum subjects, leaders have not identified the most important knowledge that should be prioritised for retrieval practice and assessment. This means that teachers lack clarity on which knowledge is selected to both emphasise in recall activities and to highlight in summative assessment. Senior leaders should work with curriculum subject leaders to identify what key knowledge teachers should focus on, to embed in pupils' long-term memory.

## **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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

## **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>	114128
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255814
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michael Beck
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison McDonough
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westraintonprimary.durham.sch.uk">www.westraintonprimary.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has a Nursery provision for two- and three-year-olds.
- There are no pupils on the school roll who attend alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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, deputy headteacher and subject curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson. They also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, and spoke to pupils and staff. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- An inspector met with the deputy headteacher, who is the school's special educational needs coordinator, to discuss the support in place for pupils with SEND. Inspectors considered school documents relating to SEND provision and visited a sample of lessons to examine how pupils with SEND were being supported in the curriculum.
- Inspectors visited the Nursery provision, met with leaders responsible for the early years and reviewed early years curriculum plans.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the headteacher, who acts as the designated safeguarding lead. They reviewed safeguarding record-keeping, including the school's single central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors spoke to staff and children about their safeguarding knowledge across the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their experience of school life. They observed lunchtime arrangements and visited the school's breakfast club and after-school provision.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- The views of parents and staff that were received through Ofsted's surveys were considered. An inspector also spoke with some parents at the end of the school day.

## **Inspection team**

Graham Findlay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Carr

Ofsted Inspector

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