

# Inspection of a good school: Sunnybrow Primary School

Hunwick Lane, Crook, County Durham DL15 0LT

---

Inspection dates:

9 February 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Some pupils told inspectors that it is easy to make friends. This is reflected in the respect pupils show for each other. Leaders expect pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. In part, this is because leaders and teachers are not clear enough about what pupils should learn and by when.

Most pupils behave well, including children in the early years. Staff support pupils effectively by ensuring that pupils understand the expectations for behaviour. This means that pupils can get on with their learning with few disruptions.

Playtimes are lively. Pupils enjoy participating in a range of activities such as badminton, while others enjoy sitting quietly in the gazebo. Pupils understand bullying and its different forms. They know the importance of telling a trusted adult. Staff deal with issues effectively. Pupils say that teachers listen to them and there is always someone they can trust who will help. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils appreciate the range of after-school activities available such as football, science club and tag rugby. Pupils say they particularly like representing their school in competitions. Some pupils are elected members of the school council. They recently investigated healthy eating by inviting staff from the school kitchen to share their expertise and make healthy chocolate hummus.

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

The new leadership team is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. Senior leaders have begun to make improvements in the short time they have been in post. They have

ensured that subject leaders who are new to their role are well supported. However, leaders have not developed a well-sequenced curriculum that clearly shows the essential knowledge pupils should know and remember in all subjects. This means that, in some lessons, teachers do not sufficiently plan lessons based on what pupils have learned before. Consequently, pupils struggle to make links to previous learning. For instance, in mathematics, some sequences of work do not build on previous knowledge well enough. Some older pupils cannot remember some multiplication tables. They struggle to sort multiples on occasion. Leaders know that they must develop the curriculum to ensure that steps in learning are precisely identified.

In some subjects, such as phonics in the early years, staff make regular checks on what children can do and understand. For example, staff consistently check and correct errors in handwriting. As a result, children remember correct letter formation. This also helps teachers to plan learning that meets the needs of all children. However, in other subjects, such as history, teachers do not make the same careful checks on pupils' understanding. As a result, lesson activities do not always help pupils to build on what they have learned before.

Most pupils enjoy the selection of books available to them in school. They like daily story time. Some pupils are reading ambassadors. They appreciate visits to a book shop to choose new books for the school. All staff have expertise in the phonics programme. They stick to the same methods to teach reading. Pupils who need extra help are well supported by teachers through extra phonics lessons. This is helping pupils to keep up with their peers. However, the books that some pupils read do not always match the sounds they know. Pupils cannot always read these books fluently. This prevents pupils from practising and applying their phonic knowledge so that they become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Leaders ensure they take part in every aspect of school life. Staff receive helpful information from the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) so that they know how to support pupils effectively in lessons.

Leaders have made sure the resources available in school represent diverse modern Britain. Older pupils are confident that it is 'okay to be different here'. Pupils show empathy towards others. They have a good knowledge of different types of families. Pupils know about a range of religious beliefs different to their own. They enjoy 'Magic Breakfast' where they can eat bagels and toast at the start of each school day.

Staff model high expectations for behaviour well. On a few occasions, pupils struggle to manage their emotions. These pupils receive support from knowledgeable staff. The support helps pupils to better manage their behaviour. Routines, right from the start in the early years, ensure there is a calm, orderly environment in school.

The leadership of the school has undergone recent significant change. Governors challenge leaders about improving pupils' attendance and how effectively funds are spent to benefit pupils. However, they do not have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. They do not make regular checks and challenge

leaders about the quality of the school's curriculum. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive regular training and updates. They understand the systems in place to report concerns. Staff know about local issues that may pose a risk to children. They know the children and their families well. This helps staff to identify pupils and families who may need support. Leaders make sure they broker the right support from external agencies to help families.

Safeguarding is included in the curriculum. Pupils learn how to keep safe while online and how to keep themselves safe in the local community.

Leaders ensure that the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children have been made.

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

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

- Leaders have not planned the small steps of key knowledge pupils need to learn as they progress through the curriculum. Teachers know the end points from the national curriculum. However, some teachers are unclear on precisely what pupils need to know and by when. As a result, pupils struggle to remember the knowledge they have been taught and struggle to make links to prior learning. Leaders should ensure that the sequences of learning and key knowledge in each subject are clear and well understood by all staff.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding systematically so that they plan activities to ensure pupils build on prior knowledge. Some pupils do not build well on what they already know. Leaders should support teachers to provide work to pupils that builds on what has been taught before.
- Some subject leaders are new to their subject leader roles. Consequently, they do not have sufficient knowledge of how to develop, review and evaluate the quality of their subjects. Senior leaders need to ensure that the programme for professional development for teachers and subject leaders continues and has the desired effect on improving subject leaders' effectiveness.
- Some pupils have reading books that are not well matched to the phonics they know. This means that some pupils are not reading fluently and with confidence. Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment effectively so that pupils are given books that match the sounds they know.
- Governors do not monitor leaders' actions to improve the quality of the curriculum well enough. As a result, governors do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of how

well pupils are learning across the curriculum. Governors need to ensure they develop their understanding of the impact of the school's curriculum on how well pupils learn.

## 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 May 2013.

## 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>	114060
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241958
<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>	78
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lynne Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Sim
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sunnybrow.durham.sch.uk">www.sunnybrow.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been considerable changes to leadership recently. Since January 2023, an acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher are in post.
- There is a governor-led nursery at the school.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not currently use 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 acting headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with five members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the education development partner from the local authority who supports the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar member of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. Inspectors also discussed behaviour with leaders, staff, pupils, parents and carers.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View and the pupil and staff surveys. An inspector also spoke with parents and carers during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Diane Buckle

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023