

Inspection of North Park Primary School

Bessemer Green, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 6PP

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at North Park Primary thoroughly enjoy school. Relationships are warm and trusting. Pupils try their hardest in class because teachers expect great things from them. Pupils also want to succeed for themselves. Pupils behave well around school. Good manners and courtesy are the norm. Breaktimes are energetic and happy. Older 'buddies' play with younger pupils. Pupils report that bullying does not happen, but if it did, they are confident adults would deal with it. Adults sort out any falling out between pupils straight away.

Pupils show a mature understanding of their own emotional well-being. They have no hesitation in raising a worry with their teacher in person or via the 'worry box'. Leaders put in place projects and activities aimed at developing pupils' resilience. Pupils strive to win class points, 'wow cards' or raffle tickets. A prize from the 'special tray' or using the special cushion are highly valued.

Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the school. Pupils report feeling safe because they know teachers will look after them. Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe online or when out of school. Older pupils know some first aid, including CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

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

Despite efforts to ensure that pupils received education during the pandemic, pupils returned to schools with significant gaps in their learning. This was particularly the case for younger pupils. Leaders and staff have adapted the curriculum for phonics and writing to ensure that they identify and address these gaps. The impact of this can be seen by what pupils can now remember and in the quality of their current work. Governors' first-hand knowledge of improvement actions allows them to both challenge and support leaders.

Phonics is taught daily using the same routines, words and phrases. Children in Reception know most letter sounds and write them neatly. Some children can apply what they have learned to unfamiliar words. Pupils read books that match their phonic knowledge. Most pupils quickly develop confidence and self-belief by reading fluently and with understanding. Pupils who fall behind receive immediate one-to-one support. Pupils grow to love reading. Older pupils strive to be one of the first to read a million words.

Leaders provide rich and meaningful experiences for pupils across the curriculum. Teachers use interesting artefacts and equipment that spark interest. Pupils visit places of local interest such as landmarks or historical buildings as part of their learning. Some subjects, such as mathematics and art and design, are well organised so pupils build knowledge progressively. In these subjects, learning is sequenced so new knowledge builds from Reception to Year 6. Key ideas link new learning. Leaders have identified the precise knowledge pupils need to remember and that teachers must assess.

In other subjects, this is not currently the case. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to use and apply new knowledge so that it becomes fixed in their long-term memory.

Children make a strong start in the early years. The atmosphere in Nursery is calm. Children use different areas with confidence and interest. Adults repeat and model language to support children's speech and communication. Children in Reception work together to investigate new ideas.

Teachers use daily checks and termly assessments to gauge pupils' understanding of new learning. They use this information to inform pupils' next steps. However, in some subjects, teachers find assessment problematic because the most important knowledge is not as precisely identified.

This is an inclusive school. No one is left out. This is typified by leaders' and pupils' warm welcome for a group of pupils from overseas who quickly felt at home. Pupils work well together. Behaviour in lessons is good. No time is lost through poor attitudes to learning.

Leaders have made it their priority to meet the individual needs of every pupil. For some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, this involves changes to the way new learning is presented or recorded. Adults are skilled at supporting pupils during lessons or in small group work. Leaders make effective use of the specialist skills of external partners such as the therapeutic counsellor.

Leaders provide many opportunities to promote pupils' wider development. Pupils learn how to understand and manage their feelings. Activities help pupils develop 'stickability' and not give up. In lessons and during the multicultural week, pupils learn about life in other countries such as India and China. Visits from the police and fire brigade explain how to deal with local issues. Pupils hope to be voted onto the school council or be chosen to be the head boy or girl. Pupils enjoy attending cookery sessions, with the dishes being taken home to eat. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders describe safeguarding as the foundation of everything they do. It is given the highest priority. Staff training helps all adults to spot when there may be an issue. Staff are vigilant about pupils' welfare. Leaders provide immediate help and support for pupils and families. This could involve signposting to other safeguarding partners or agencies.

Leaders keep detailed records and undertake vetting checks for new staff. The linked safeguarding governor checks on systems and records. Staff know how to raise a concern about a colleague or leader. Pupils are taught about staying safe in and out

of school. Pupils learn about safe relationships and consent in an age-appropriate way. Teachers deliver lessons and assemblies about road safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the key knowledge that leaders want pupils to know, and teachers to assess, is not identified clearly enough. The main concepts that link knowledge together in these subjects lack clarity. This means that some pupils struggle to connect their learning and build on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that they review the curriculum to ensure there is clarity for teachers about what pupils should know at each stage of their learning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise using their knowledge to embed their learning. This means that they struggle to remember some aspects of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers build in sufficient time for pupils to practise and apply their knowledge to help embed their learning.

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	132172
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255724
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Foster
Headteacher	Patricia Monk
Website	www.northpark.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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.

- 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and other school staff.
- An inspector met four members of the local governing body, including the chair. An inspector also met with the school development partner from Durham local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history, art and

design and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View were considered, including all written comments.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. The inspectors considered the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Davie	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Pearce	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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023