

Inspection of a good school: Biddick Hall Junior School

Chesterton Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 9SP

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

Outcome

Biddick Hall Junior School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this welcoming school. Leaders establish high expectations for pupils both socially and academically. Pupils live up to these expectations. They make excellent progress in the curriculum subjects. Staff know pupils well and inspire confidence in them to give of their best.

Pupils are very proud of the responsibilities they volunteer to take on. The science councillors contribute to the mathematics, science and technology week in school. The group also works in the community and takes part in events such as tree planting at Temple Park. School councillors and sports leaders make valuable contributions to school life. These roles help pupils to become confident and articulate in expressing themselves to others.

The school is a calm place where pupils are very well behaved. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about the behaviour reward system. House captains and vice captains motivate their teams in assemblies. Pupils report that bullying rarely happens. They feel safe in school and are confident that teachers would sort out any concerns they may have.

There are a wide variety of after school clubs and enrichment activities. Pupils relish performing at the Sage Concert Hall in Gateshead and the Customs House Music Festival in South Shields.

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

Leaders have established a highly ambitious curriculum at Biddick Hall Juniors. They achieve their aim of preparing pupils well for their next stage of education. The wide-ranging curriculum builds up pupils' knowledge in small steps. There are many

opportunities for pupils to recap on their prior learning. Pupils believe this helps them to remember more. They understand how new learning connects with their prior learning.

Teachers skilfully deliver the curriculum through activities that inspire pupils and match the intended curriculum outcomes. They constantly check that pupils understand the concepts and methods that they are being taught. Pupils test out their ideas with talk partners. They have time to process and rehearse their answers. This increases pupils' confidence so that all are willing to provide answers to teacher questions.

Pupils treasure reading. They have access to the revamped school library and extra-curricular clubs dedicated to reading. Once pupils master phonics, teachers ensure they become fluent readers. Teachers model reading every day. The texts provide pupils with a rich vocabulary which they expertly transfer into their writing.

The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has rapidly increased in recent years. Leadership of SEND is a strength of the school. Leaders work closely with the infant school staff to ensure there is a smooth transition. Together, they plan and put in place tailored support to meet pupils' needs when they enter Year 3. Leaders are tenacious in requesting additional support from partner agencies. Staff are highly experienced and well trained in SEND. They make adaptations in lessons so that all pupils can succeed. These include, for example, providing simplified instructions or visual prompts.

Leaders ensure that pupils' learn about diverse groups and cultures. For example, in art and design, pupils learn about the work of Abel Rodriquez, an Amazonian artist. In English, class texts include stories about Syrian refugees. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of protected characteristics and the concept of equality.

Pupils also learn about the rich heritage of the North East of England. They visit many of the region's iconic attractions. These include Durham Cathedral, Beamish Open Air Museum and the Baltic Art Gallery. This results in pupils being proud of the area and spurs them on to achieve even more.

Leaders follow a rigorous pupil attendance policy. They work with families to help overcome any barriers that prevent pupils attending school. Attendance has improved since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff welcome the support and challenge from senior leaders. Governors carry out their roles well. Senior leaders are strategic in planning ahead for the needs of pupils who are not yet in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils take part in the 'reducing accidents at play' initiative with the local fire and rescue service. They learn how to react in various situations. Pupils learn about the dangers of the nearby Metro train lines.

The governing body employs an external specialist to deliver safeguarding training to governors and staff members. A comprehensive safeguarding audit is updated regularly and sent to the local authority.

Leaders make appropriate child protection referrals to social services, even when there is opposition from parents. Leaders challenge decisions by local agencies if there is a concern that a child is at risk of harm.

Background

When we have judged 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	108678
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10240759
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda Hayward
Headteacher	Michelle Collinson
Website	www.biddickhallschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no changes to leadership since the last inspection.
- 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, class teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the 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 inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. The inspector spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their views of the school and considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and Ofsted's Parent View. The views of staff were taken into account through a number of meetings, as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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