

Inspection of Cassop Primary School

Cassop, Durham DH6 4RA

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 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	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders of Cassop Primary are proud that it is a school where adults and pupils promote awareness of children's rights. Leaders encourage pupils to share their ideas, care for others and to develop self-confidence.

Pupils feel safe here. They behave well in lessons and during social times. Leaders plan activities that help pupils to be both resilient and courageous. This can be seen as pupils focus on learning challenges and play together outside. For example, at playtimes, pupils enjoy climbing trees and making dens together in the school field. They feel safe doing this because the adults look after them well.

Pupils know to tell trusted adults about any problems. They say bullying is very rare. The local Easter tradition of 'egg jarping', or competitive egg-cracking, showed how pupils are learning to cope with adversity. They did not mind when their eggs cracked, and they cheered the pupils who won the competition.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. They are developing the curriculum to be challenging and interesting. They include opportunities to learn about the local area and local people. Leaders help pupils to know about, and be proud of, the local mining heritage. However, they also recognise that pupils need to learn more about the world beyond the local area.

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

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are focused on developing a curriculum that inspires pupils to want to learn. In all subjects, leaders have thought carefully about learning from Year 1 to Year 6. Some subjects, such as physical education, music and languages, are taught by subject specialists.

In mathematics, the important subject content that leaders want pupils to know and remember is carefully planned out. This supports the teachers to plan sequences of learning that help pupils to build knowledge over time. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic to use this knowledge to solve problems. They are keen to challenge themselves to learn more. However, in some other subjects, what leaders want pupils to know is less clearly mapped out in the mixed-age classes. Leaders know that there is more to do to make sure the most important learning is identified and emphasised.

Leaders are focused on encouraging pupils to read regularly and well. New systems and resources have been introduced to ensure that reading takes place daily in all classes. Pupils read independently, in pairs, and to adults at different points over the week. Pupils also have lessons that enable them to answer questions about texts. However, while a new scheme is being used to support teachers to plan learning,

further clarity is needed to ensure that the new approaches are used with consistency across key stage 2.

Leaders have also changed how early reading is taught. Staff are confident to teach reading using the new phonics programme. They are trained to use it effectively and consistently. Lessons follow a consistent format. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities that help them remember and recognise the sounds in words. Any pupils who are finding reading difficult are given extra support to catch up. Pupils practise reading regularly. Most are given books that contain newly taught sounds. This helps them learn to read quickly and confidently.

Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a great start. Children play and learn together from the earliest days. There is a warm and caring atmosphere in the provision. Early years leaders have thought carefully about what children should learn. Children enjoy the exciting and well-planned activities, especially in the workshop. They are happy and confident learners. However, leaders recognise that in some areas this important learning is not always built on as children move into Year 1.

Leaders ensure that this is an inclusive school. They identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately and at the earliest possible stage. Leaders work with parents, teachers and support staff to ensure pupils can follow the same curriculum as their peers. They adapt classroom activities effectively to enable pupils with SEND to succeed. Consequently, most pupils learn well.

Leaders see supporting pupils' personal development as essential. They ensure that personal, social, health and economic education is taught regularly. This helps pupils to understand why things such as equality and tolerance of difference are important. Pupils value the varied roles they can have in school. They enjoy the responsibility of being a 'Rights Respecting Leader' or a 'Sports Lead'. They say that their ideas are listened to and they contribute to planning events, such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee or the King's coronation.

The school has recently become part of The Acorn Federation. This has enabled experienced governors to join the school governing body. Governors visit the school regularly. They are supporting the headteacher effectively to identify further improvements. Some staff have several roles in the school. They say they are well supported by leaders to carry them out. They value the team approach that leaders have created in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff recognise that safeguarding pupils is a priority. Leaders ensure that staff attend regular training. They monitor the attendance, well-being and behaviour of pupils closely. If concerns are raised, leaders work well with a wide variety of professionals, such as the local authority emotional well-being and support

workers, to help pupils and families. Leaders and staff know the families and pupils well.

Pupils are confident to talk with trusted adults about any concerns. They say that adults listen to them and help them with worries. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and in the local area. Older pupils talk with confidence about the dangers of peer pressure and their right to be safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not clarified exactly what knowledge should be taught and in what order. This means that teachers do not have sufficient support to plan lessons that enable pupils to build on prior learning. As a result, in these subjects, pupils often do not remember their learning. Leaders must specify exactly what pupils must know in all areas of the curriculum and identify how this should be taught progressively across the mixed-aged classes.
- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum content progression from early years to key stage 1 has not been considered carefully enough. This leads to the unnecessary repetition of some learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum builds in clearly sequenced steps and prepares children for their next stage of 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	114075
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255648
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	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michelle Radford
Headteacher	Victoria Hewison
Website	www.cassop.durham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Cassop Primary School is a smaller-than-average school with five classes.
- There is a nursery provision at the school.
- The school has breakfast and after-school 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.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, class teachers, other staff in the school and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, history, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views on the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- During the inspection, a range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Andrea Batley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Watson

Ofsted Inspector

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