

Inspection of a good school: Consett Junior School

Beechdale Road, Consett, County Durham DH8 6AY

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Consett Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school. Warm and caring relationships contribute to this. Leaders make it their business to get to know their pupils and families straight away. Their constant presence at the school gate enables this. Pupils flourish in this nurturing environment.

There are high expectations for pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They show high levels of enthusiasm and engagement in their lessons. They say the best thing about their school is their teachers, who are always there to help them.

Playtimes are lively. Older pupils take their role as the 'sports crew' seriously. They instigate games and activities for younger pupils to enjoy. Pupils behave well. Their movement around school is calm and orderly. Reports of bullying are rare. Leaders thoroughly investigate any such incidents.

Pupils welcome and enjoy the raft of after-school clubs available to them that nurture their talents and interests. Clubs range from cross country, yoga and embroidery to 'animal documentary'. At the heart of curriculum enrichment, is a longstanding commitment to provide all pupils with brass instrument tuition. This provides a pathway to the highly revered school brass band. The band continues to grow and thrive since its foundation in 1974.

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

Leaders are passionate about providing pupils with the best learning opportunities they can. They have ensured that the curriculum meets the ambition of the national curriculum. They use assessment effectively. Leaders use this information to adapt the curriculum when needed. This year, they have made several adjustments to the curriculum. These were in response to last year's disappointing outcomes.

Leaders place high priority on developing pupils' reading skills. They nurture a love of reading. A daily reading session secures pupils' reading fluency and stamina. Teachers make

sure those pupils in need of extra practice read to an adult every day. Most pupils transfer from the infant school with a secure grasp of phonics knowledge. When this is not the case, pupils receive timely phonics intervention to help them catch up. Leaders have ensured they follow the same scheme as that of their feeder infant school.

A new approach to improving pupils' comprehension skills is recently introduced. There is a clear progression of core knowledge pupils must learn to improve their skills. In most classes, teachers use this precisely to guide their lessons. It helps pupils to make good progress. This is not yet consistent across the school.

A strong curriculum for physical education (PE) builds pupils' substantive and performance knowledge. In lessons there are high levels of pupil engagement. Pupils' knowledge and confidence builds securely. Pupils know the importance of physical health and the function of main muscle groups. They are aware of improvements in their own performance. A strong programme of after-school sports clubs supplements the core PE offer.

Leaders have recently introduced a new mathematics curriculum. It builds core knowledge in mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving. It is already having a positive impact on pupils' participation and enjoyment. It is helping pupils to become enthusiastic mathematicians. It is securing pupils' progress in mathematical fluency and problem-solving. Pupils' competency in mathematical reasoning is less secure. Opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking are often unfinished or missed.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in school life. Pupils with SEND access the same broad curriculum as their peers. Individual pupils receive precise targets for their achievement. They receive skilful support in class when needed.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well sequenced. Topics studied are done so with increasing complexity. Pupils learn how to treat everyone with respect. They learn important values to help them succeed as they prepare for their next steps.

Staff well-being is important to leaders, including governors. They do all they can to make sure staff workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils well. They access regular training. They are alert to any changes in pupils' demeanour and are swift to report their concerns. All staff recognise the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. This underpins a strong culture of safeguarding at the school.

Leaders manage pupils' absence with much resolve. They see this as the first step in their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders keep detailed records and act swiftly on information received. They undertake recruitment checks with the same determination.

Staff help pupils to feel safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, especially when accessing the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Across the school, there is variability in the quality of teaching for reading comprehension. Not all pupils are supported as well as they should be to improve their wider reading skills. Leaders should iron out these inconsistencies to ensure that all pupils are fully supported to improve their reading comprehension.
- Teaching to develop pupils' mathematical reasoning skills is not consistent with leaders' expectations. Some pupils do not have opportunities to develop their competency with these skills. Leaders need to ensure that they implement this aspect of the mathematics curriculum fully and consistently so that all pupils have more opportunities to apply their knowledge and think more deeply about their learning. This will help to better prepare them for their next stage of learning.

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 December 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

Unique reference number	114051
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255845
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alison Fraser
Headteacher	Paul Dixon
Website	www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school offers breakfast club provision for all pupils each morning.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and a range of staff. She also spoke with members of the local governing body as well as a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and break-times.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. She met with leaders, staff and pupils to understand how pupils are kept safe.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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