

Inspection of Hesleden Primary School

Hesleden, Hartlepool TS27 4PT

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Leaders know their pupils and families well. Some of the actions leaders have taken since the last inspection have had a positive impact on pupils' experiences, for example the work leaders have done on developing the curriculum. However, the experiences and learning of pupils in the early years are weak. The curriculum in early years has not been developed in line with the curriculum in other parts of the school.

Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to promoting positive behaviour. The new approach is linked to the school 'rules' and 'charter'. However, leaders have not defined clearly enough the expectations for how staff will deliberately teach pupils, including children in the early years, about positive learning behaviours. The expectations for how staff deal with off-task behaviour in lessons are also not clear. Pupils speak about how the behaviour of other pupils varies, depending on who is teaching them.

Pupils know that they can speak to an adult if they are worried. Many pupils talk about the 'post-box' where they post concerns and then have the chance to speak to a member of staff about something they are worried about. Pupils value this opportunity and system. Bullying sometimes happens. Leaders take this seriously. However, some of the actions taken by leaders about these incidents are not clearly or accurately recorded.

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

Leaders have undertaken work to develop the curriculum. They have given thought to what pupils learn, and the order in which it is taught, to best help pupils know and remember it. In some subjects, such as mathematics and computing, leaders have considered the subject-specific vocabulary and key knowledge that pupils need. Subject leaders deliver training to staff to help develop subject knowledge across the curriculum. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Leaders consider how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can be supported to fully access the same curriculum as their peers. Subject leaders have worked with staff in the early years to consider how subjects link with the curriculum in Nursery and Reception. However, this work has not led to experiences and opportunities for children that prepare them well enough for their learning in Year 1 and beyond.

Leaders have invested significant time in developing the phonics curriculum. Phonics is taught from Reception. There is a consistent lesson structure. Staff are knowledgeable about how to teach early reading. Leaders use assessment information to quickly identify the pupils who need extra help with reading. These pupils receive targeted and precise support to catch up with their peers. Pupils are able to read unfamiliar books containing sounds they have been taught. Leaders have introduced a collection of reading books that aim to give pupils exposure to a range of different types of texts during their time in school.

The curriculum taught to children in the early years does not give them the start to their education that they deserve. Leaders are unclear on how the curriculum should be structured, and so activities and learning for children are disjointed. Leaders have not identified the crucial knowledge that they want children to know by the end of Reception to prepare them well for key stage 1. Staff have varying knowledge and understanding of the early years curriculum and how young children learn. This delays children's learning, particularly in their knowledge of communication and the use of ambitious vocabulary. Staff are sometimes unclear on why specific activities and experiences are used to support children's learning. Staff introduce some routines to develop children's independence, such as putting on coats and washing hands, but these are not modelled clearly so that children can copy and repeat independently.

Leaders have created a clear personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They have embedded relationships and sex education within this. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships. They know how to stay safe online and how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils have an awareness of groups of people in the wider world who may face prejudice and discrimination. A small number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are 'peer mentors' who support younger pupils at lunchtime. However, these broader opportunities to enrich and widen pupils' experiences in school beyond their classroom learning are limited for pupils of all ages. This means that pupils have limited opportunities to develop their talents and interests and to contribute meaningfully to their school community.

Governors understand their statutory duties. However, they do not hold leaders to account or challenge enough around the quality of education received by all pupils. They have an inaccurate picture of some areas of the school. Staff feel that governors are supportive and alert to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are aware of who to report concerns to. Leaders have ensured that staff receive regular training and updates on relevant safeguarding matters. Leaders work with external agencies to target further support for pupils and families. Staff are aware of local safeguarding risks within the community. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach for documenting concerns and recording actions they have taken to safeguard pupils. However, some of the recording of actions undertaken by leaders about safeguarding concerns are not fully reflective of the steps that they have taken to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the early years curriculum across all areas of learning is well defined and enacted. As a result, children do not have the opportunity to build solid foundations to prepare them for future learning. Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum they want children to experience is clearly defined and well understood by staff, and that this translates into experiences and opportunities for children that develop their understanding and vocabulary over time.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff are clear on the expectations for pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how adults teach and promote positive learning behaviours and attitudes, and this can affect the flow of learning in some lessons. Leaders should ensure that the expectations and approaches for teaching pupils how to behave in a positive way are clear for all staff, and that staff are given the support to apply these consistently in classrooms and around school.
- Opportunities to extend and enrich pupils' experiences beyond the classroom are not coherently planned, rich or varied. As a result, pupils experience a limited range of activities that would contribute to their broader understanding of the world and development of their character. Leaders should ensure that these enrichment opportunities are carefully planned and offered to all pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that the systems and processes they have in place to quality assure and check the impact of their actions give them the clearest picture of what is happening in all areas of the school. As a result, leaders at all levels have an incomplete picture of the strengths and areas for development of the school. Leaders should ensure that they refine and strengthen the quality assurance processes they have in place so that they have detailed information to establish with more clarity where things are going well and where further action is needed.
- While leaders take necessary action to make sure that pupils are safe, records do not fully reflect the actions they have taken. As a result, this can make it more difficult for leaders to identify patterns of concern. Leaders should ensure that written records are reflective of the actions they have taken, and therefore enable them to seek further support and advice when necessary.

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	114143
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255620
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	96
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Laura Jamieson
Headteacher	Dawn Dunn
Website	www.hesleden.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspection team spoke to senior leaders and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with senior leaders from across the school.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, including the chairperson.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leaders and reviewed curriculum

plans, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning.

- Inspectors reviewed curriculum documentation from other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult and met with pupils formally in both same sex and mixed groups.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through informal discussions at the beginning and end of the day and through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors team spoke to a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Liam Colclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kate Morris

Ofsted Inspector

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