

Inspection of a good school: Sedgefield Primary School

Rectory Row, Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham TS21 2BJ

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Sedgefield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision of 'Learning Together for Life' is central to pupils and staff alike. Pupils are caring and support each other considerably. Staff know pupils well. Many pupils said that 'everyone looks after each other'.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for every pupil to achieve well and develop pride in the local community. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have high expectations for behaviour and learning. Leaders have developed a curriculum to include learning about the local area. For instance, pupils in Year 4 recently enjoyed reading about the history of Sedgefield in 'The Magic Mobile' by local author Norma Neal.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to help each other by becoming buddies, peer mentors and members of the school council. Pupils know to write their worries on slips of paper. Peer mentors help pupils with 'minor' worries. Pupils say that bullying is rare. If it happens adults are quick to sort it out. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils know they are expected to behave well in and out of lessons. Older pupils understand the importance of setting an example for younger children to follow. They enjoy receiving praise from staff and earning 'green cards' for showing acts of kindness.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. All subjects are sequenced detailing the important knowledge and skills pupils need to acquire as they move through the school. In reading and mathematics, planning starts from pre-school to Year 6. Teachers revisit core knowledge and skills often to ensure pupils remember important knowledge. During lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding effectively. They identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This ensures pupils are well supported and prepared for future learning. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, and after the teacher had noticed pupils required further

support, a mathematics intervention enabled pupils to practise counting in multiples of three. This helped pupils to prepare for an addition and subtraction of fractions lesson.

Younger pupils achieve well in phonics. This is because leaders ensure that all staff have expert knowledge to teach the phonics programme. As a result, children in the early years get off to a strong start in reading. Teachers make sure that reading books are well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. This helps pupils to develop fluency and confidence in reading. Pupils who find reading more difficult are given extra reading sessions. This is helping these pupils to catch up. Leaders ensure that pupils practise reading aloud to staff and volunteers. Pupils read high-quality texts in lessons. Pupils enjoy reading 'The Last Bear' by Hannah Gold. They show enthusiasm for reading and explain their learning well.

Leaders have made changes to the mathematics curriculum. This is to ensure gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed because of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many pupils have strong mathematical knowledge. However, some pupils are not getting enough practise to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem-solving.

Children make a positive start to school in early years. In pre-school, children enjoy making rhymes by playing 'silly soup'. Staff support children well. Carefully planned activities ensure children practise counting and writing often. This prepares children well for Reception. Leaders are changing the early years curriculum plans to ensure they link to Year 1 planning for foundation subjects. These revisions are not complete.

Leaders ensure staff are well informed about how best to support pupils with SEND. Effective assessment ensures pupils' needs are identified. Pupils with SEND are supported effectively to access a full and ambitious curriculum. For example, some pupils have access to technology to develop their communication and language skills. Staff consider how to support pupils while developing pupils' independence. Leaders ensure staff receive training to support the range of pupils' needs.

Classrooms are calm, purposeful working environments. From the start in early years, children focus on their learning well. They cooperate by taking turns and sharing. In lessons, older pupils encourage one another to achieve well in lessons.

The school's wider curriculum supports pupils' personal development exceptionally well. On Fridays, pupils come together in mixed age 'Family Groups'. They enjoy working alongside their siblings and peers. Pupils learn about topics such as careers, significant people through history and internet safety. Leaders have forged strong links with the local community. Pupils enjoy supporting 'Sedgefield Bloomers' by planting tubs on the village green every year. Many pupils enjoy learning to play a brass instrument or attending ukulele club. Sports clubs such as gymnastics, dance, cheerleading and yoga are well attended by pupils.

Governors are actively involved in school life. They have a clear vision for the school moving forward. Staff feel proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support from leaders to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that everyone who works in the school receives regular training on safeguarding topics. This enables staff to be aware of the potential risks to pupils and to know the systems for reporting concerns. Staff know pupils very well. This helps staff to identify pupils who may be at risk. Leaders work well with external agencies to get help for pupils and families when required. Leaders maintain thorough records of recruitment checks for anyone who works in the school.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including online. They are taught road safety through activities, such as 'Bikeability'.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to problem solve in mathematics. As a result, they do not practise or develop their reasoning skills often or well enough. Leaders should ensure that pupils are provided with regular opportunities to problem solve in mathematics.
- Curriculum plans for the early years could be improved further to identify learning connections from pre-school to Year 1 in foundation subjects. Leaders should continue with their plans to develop and embed the planned sequence of learning and identify the vocabulary children must acquire from pre-school to Year 1.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2013.

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	114159
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255833
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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Dudley Waters
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea Cox
Website	www.sedgefield-pri.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative providers.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body. The inspector also met with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, support staff and held a telephone conversation with a representative from Durham local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. 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 also reviewed curriculum documentation in other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke to staff, parents and carers, governors and pupils. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads. During the inspection, a range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunch and breaktimes.
- The inspector spoke with parents during the inspection. Responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire and free-text-responses were also considered. The views of staff and pupils were considered through discussions and surveys.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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