

Inspection of a good school: Leadgate Primary School - Split Site

Alder Grove and West Street, Leadgate, Consett, County Durham DH8 7RH

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2023

Outcome

Leadgate Primary School - Split Site continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school. Pupils love coming to see their friends and have fun learning. Relationships are warm and caring between pupils and with adults. Teachers expect pupils to try their best, and they do. Pupils are expected to try and sort out any fallouts themselves but know teachers will step in if needed.

There are no reports of bullying, mainly because pupils know everyone is unique and special. There are high levels of tolerance and respect. Pupils try hard to receive 10 stars for good behaviour or good work because then they can have a dip in the box of prizes. The headteacher's special award of a huge sticker is especially valued.

Pupils say that they feel safe because they trust adults to look after them. Pupils know staff will listen if they share a worry or are upset. Younger pupils speak of having kind hands, feet and words which helps them to behave well.

Pupils love working outside, doing a bug hunt or toasting marshmallows beside the brazier fire pit. It is no wonder pupils say learning is fun given the exciting learning opportunities they have, including trips out of school.

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

Despite efforts to ensure pupils received education during the pandemic, pupils returned to schools with significant gaps in their learning. This was particularly the case for younger pupils. Leaders and staff have since adapted the curriculum for phonics and writing to ensure that they identify and address these gaps. The impact of this can be seen in what pupils can now remember and the quality of their work.

Leaders are committed to and determined that every pupil reads confidently and fluently as soon as possible. The new approach to teaching phonics starts in Nursery. Daily phonics lessons follow the same routine and structure. Children in Reception already know many of the sounds that they need to be able to read unknown words such as 'sandpit'. Adults model how to pronounce sounds, and pupils accurately copy. Leaders have

invested in resources and new books in school. Books in classroom reading areas are changed every term. Staff receive regular training and updates. A love of reading is developing. Younger pupils proudly explain about the characters from books on the mural covering all walls of the library. Pupils are quickly learning to read with confidence and expression.

Leaders are developing an exciting curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils in this locality. In most subjects, such as mathematics and history, key themes are threaded through learning. This helps pupils connect new knowledge to what they already know. Learning builds progressively in each unit of work. Teachers check that pupils learn new information in the right order. The essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember at the end of a topic is crystal clear. Teachers make checks in lessons and complete more formal assessments to find out what pupils know and remember. Help is given to anyone falling behind. Further work is needed in a few subjects, such as design technology, so that all subjects are of equally high quality.

Pupils give their best in lessons. Any occasional shouting out or loss of concentration is addressed immediately by teachers. Children in Reception work happily on their own or with their friends. They show genuine pleasure in completing subtraction calculations. This is an inclusive school in which all are treated equally. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are proactive in seeking support and help from external partners for these pupils. Pupils with SEND receive the support they need in lessons. This can be through repetition, word banks, assistive technology or one-to-one support from an adult. All pupils access the same curriculum and thrive.

Leaders place a high value on providing opportunities for pupils to experience people, places and activities that they may not otherwise have. Non-curriculum days promote pupils' independence and perseverance as well as teamwork. Links to schools abroad develop pupils' awareness of other people and cultures. Pupils learn about people of other faiths and that families can be different. Visits to theatres, local museums and places of natural beauty widen pupils' horizons. Visitors to school teach music, dance or martial arts. Pupils engage in environmental work and raise money for charities. This is a caring and tolerant community school, always outward facing and considerate of others.

Staff share a common vision and bond of seeing pupils thrive. Strong teamwork is tangible. Leaders listen to staff and act on concerns. Leaders know staff's well-being is key and alleviate their workload as much as possible. Staff feel valued and trusted.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders put safeguarding at the heart of all the school does. It is everyone's responsibility. Pupils' welfare, well-being and safety are paramount for leaders. Staff training is regular and thorough and allows them to spot even the tiniest concern. It also addresses specific local safeguarding issues. Communication between staff and clear systems of action ensure nothing is missed.

Leaders provide help for pupils and families without delay. This includes signposting to external safeguarding partners, counselling or practical help. Office staff carry out appropriate vetting checks on the suitability of staff. Checks on systems and records are made by the link safeguarding governor. Pupils learn how to stay safe in and out of school. This includes being safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some foundation subjects such as design technology is not as well mapped out as it is in others such as mathematics and history. Key ideas that link learning are vague. Essential knowledge pupils need is not sharply defined. Pupils find it difficult to link and remember learning. Leaders need to make sure that staff identify the most important knowledge that pupils need to know so that they learn well across all subjects.

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 March 2018.

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	114039
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10269212
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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Plant
Headteacher	Mark Watson
Website	www.leadgate.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The Nursery was closed during the inspection due to a collapsed roof.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and other school staff.
- The inspector met four members of the local governing board, including the chair. He also held a telephone conversation with the school development partner.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about a range of curriculum subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at breaktime and lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of younger pupils gave the inspector a tour of the lower school building and its grounds.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. He looked at documents and records relating to safeguarding. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View were considered, including all written comments.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. He considered the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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