

Inspection of a good school: Blue Coat CofE (Aided) Junior School

Langley Road, Newton Hall Estate, Durham DH1 5LP

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Blue Coat CofE (Aided) Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend Blue Coat CofE (Aided) Junior School. Leaders and staff have created a caring culture. Pupils feel safe and confident to share their ideas and opinions. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop their independence through a range of leadership roles. For example, the eco-warriors minimise the schools' energy use, and the Christian Character Committee welcomes new pupils to school. The school's Christian ethos and community spirit help pupils learn how to be a good citizen.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils generally behave well in lessons. Pupils know the difference between bullying and disagreements. Leaders help pupils understand how to resolve friendship issues. They support pupils in discussing their feelings and listening to others. Bullying does not happen often. When it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a range of opportunities to develop as well-rounded young people. Pupils learn financial skills, such as how to budget. They learn about mental well-being and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. A range of trips and visits extend pupils' experiences and deepen their learning. For example, pupils recently visited a local university and enjoyed the chance to play with the orchestra.

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

Leaders have created a broad curriculum. They have identified the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. This is broken down into smaller steps that are manageable for pupils to learn. Leaders have considered the sequencing of the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge builds logically. For example, in history, important concepts such as monarchy and tax are woven throughout the curriculum.

Leaders have strong subject knowledge. They have invested time in training for teachers, particularly in mathematics and reading. This means that teachers are confident in

supporting pupils' learning. Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons by using a range of approaches. They use questions and quizzes to check pupils' understanding and to help them to remember important knowledge over time.

The curriculum in some subjects is more established than in others. Sometimes, the work given to pupils in some subjects does not support them in building a thorough understanding of topics and concepts. Leaders know this and have plans in place for further improvements.

Leaders' ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are high. Support plans for pupils with SEND are of high quality. They provide teachers with precise information about a pupil's targets and the strategies to use in the classroom to support their learning.

Pupils enjoy lots of opportunities to read throughout the school day. This includes reading for pleasure, as well as analysing and evaluating texts in reading lessons. Leaders check the starting points of pupils when they join the school in Year 3. They use this information to provide help for pupils who find reading more difficult. All staff are trained in phonics. The support provided for pupils to help them improve their reading is effective and matches their needs.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Most lessons are free from low-level disruption. Leaders have put in place a clear behaviour policy, which is understood by pupils. Many pupils work hard and strive to achieve weekly reward certificates. However, during breaktime and lunchtime, some older pupils use derogatory and unacceptable language.

Leaders have carefully considered pupils' wider development. They have ensured that the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum equips pupils with the skills and knowledge they need for their transition to secondary school. Pupils learn about the rule of law and respect and tolerance. They develop their listening and oracy skills in weekly debates of topical questions.

Leaders are considerate of workload. Staff appreciate the recent changes to the school feedback policy, which allows them to check pupils' learning in an efficient way. Staff also value the professional development offered by leaders. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development at the school. They are ambitious for all pupils to succeed. Governors use monitoring visits to inform their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders share the latest information about local risks with staff. This enables staff to be vigilant to any signs that a pupil may be at risk.

Leaders work proactively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive support when they need it. Safeguarding records are detailed and timely. Leaders also make the necessary checks on adults working with pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They can name trusted adults who can help them if they have concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums for some subjects are new. Leaders should review the implementation of newly introduced curriculums to ensure that the work given to pupils enables them to achieve highly in these subjects.
- Some pupils use derogatory language during social time and show a lack of respect and understanding towards others. This is not consistently addressed. Leaders should take further action to enable all pupils to behave well and to address the use of derogatory language more effectively.

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 November 2012.

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	114274
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255873
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Heidi Donkin
Headteacher	Lysa Grieve
Website	www.bluecoatcofejunior.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Durham. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2019. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.

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.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and history. To do this, they met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read, and met with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.

- The inspector also met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and experiences in school. They also considered pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey, as well as written comments from parents. Inspectors spoke informally to parents outside the school.

Inspection team

Kate Morris, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

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