

Inspection of a good school: Consett Infant School

Teasdale Street, Consett, County Durham DH8 6AF

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Consett Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Consett Infant School is a friendly, welcoming school, where pupils feel safe. They know that adults care for them deeply and that there is always someone who they can talk to. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know the pupils and families well.

Children get off to a flying start in early years. They love being in the different outside spaces, exploring and playing together. Staff encourage children to share equipment and to take turns. Children are well supported by staff to grow in confidence and to choose learning activities for themselves. Children's interests help to shape the curriculum.

Pupils speak highly of Daisy, the school therapy dog. She contributes to pupil well-being, acting as a comfort and confidante. Pupils who find it difficult to talk to others often express their feelings to her.

Staff have high expectations of behaviour, and pupils respond by behaving well. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They become engrossed in practical activities in class. Pupils can recall their learning in history really well, giving lots of facts about the Great Fire of London. They are keen to discuss what they know and to learn more.

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

Following the adoption of a new phonics curriculum, staff have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have the appropriate resources to deliver the curriculum. Staff are more consistent in the teaching of phonics. The change has already brought about an improvement. Pupils are better prepared for reading in Year 2 and ready to work on building their reading fluency. Phonics reading materials are made available online to read at home. Some parents report this to be a barrier to reading. The governing body is aware of this and is looking to raise funds for more phonics books. The school has

promoted a love of reading through the 'Hygge Bear' sessions at the local library. Pupils enjoy this special time, including choosing their own 'reading for pleasure' books.

Pupils have an enthusiastic attitude towards mathematics. They achieve well by the end of Year 2. However, some current Year 2 pupils did not attain the knowledge they need by the end of Year 1. To bring about greater consistency in the teaching of mathematics, a new curriculum has been introduced. Staff are still coming to terms with a different way of working. They are adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes more practical activities and discussion time. The school is working with external partners, such as the regional mathematics hub, to further refine the curriculum and delivery.

The school has a growing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many have complex needs. The school has been forward thinking in providing training for staff on aspects of SEND, such as autism spectrum disorder. This means they have the knowledge and skills to support all pupils with SEND well. Planning for SEND is detailed and based on the explicit needs of individual pupils. The school liaises well with parents and external agencies. The provision for SEND is a strength of the school.

There is a close working relationship between staff at Consett Infant School and Beechdale Nursery. This is particularly evident in the early years provision. The areas set up for learning and the routines are similar. This helps the children settle into school very quickly. Children appear to be very happy. They talk about having lots of friends. Staff follow a curriculum that is adaptable to the interests of the children but includes essential knowledge to equip them for Year 1. Staff are adept in communicating with children and developing their spoken language.

Pupils understand the traffic light reward system for good behaviour. They look forward to receiving a 'green light card'. The school is a calm place to learn. Pupils are eager to be 'Corridor Captains', acting as role models for behaviour to others.

There is a robust system in place to follow up on any pupil absence, but the attendance of some pupils remains too low. This is detrimental to their education and disruptive to teaching when absentees return to school.

The school works in partnership with local charities and groups to extend the support for pupils and their families. In-school counselling is available for pupils and parents. A range of therapies is offered, which is well received.

The governing body knows the school well. It is effective in thinking ahead and deciding on future priorities. Governors review the success of new initiatives. They offer leaders both challenge and support. The new curriculum resources have reduced the workload for teachers, which they applaud.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The intent and ambitions of the mathematics curriculum are clear. However, teachers are at different stages of implementing the desired curriculum. This means that some pupils learn more than others. The school should ensure that all staff are trained in delivering the mathematics curriculum.
- The attendance of some pupils is still too low. This means that they miss out on some key learning and have some gaps in their knowledge. The school needs to continue to work with parents and to implement attendance policies.

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 20 and 21 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	114052
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10269238
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Jukes
Headteacher	Julia Graham
Website	http://www.consett-inf.durham.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is federated with Beechdale Nursery School.
- The headteacher and governing body lead both schools.
- The school does not use any alternative education provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Meetings were also held with the leader of early years, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and the school development partner from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Prior to the inspection, the inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. She spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. The inspector spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were taken into account through a number of meetings, as were their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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