

Inspection of Harrowgate Hill Primary School

Thompson Street West, Darlington, County Durham DL3 0HZ

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 September 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

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff at Harrowgate Hill Primary School are committed to supporting the well-being of pupils. Pupils learn how to manage their emotions. The school provides valued support to families and pupils who need additional help. The school is caring and nurturing.

The quality of education requires improvement. Leaders have made recent improvements to the curriculum in some subjects such as early reading, science and physical education. Pupils learn well in these areas. However, in other subjects, learning is not as secure. Some activities do not help pupils to learn and remember important knowledge. Checks on learning are not always precise. This hinders some pupils' achievements.

Behaviour in the school is not consistently good. In lessons, some pupils do not have a positive attitude towards their learning. They do not concentrate well. Some pupils give up too easily when faced with a challenge. Most pupils behave well outside of the classroom. On the playground, pupils enjoy playing with their friends. They play cooperatively together. Pupils are happy in school.

The school deals with incidents of bullying or inappropriate language effectively. Pupils trust staff. They are confident that any concerns that they raise will be taken seriously. Pupils feel safe in school.

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

The school's vision for the curriculum is clear and ambitious. However, the school's ambitions are not fully realised. Pupils currently experience a variable quality of education. Leaders have recently acted to strengthen the curriculum for early reading. Reading is now a strength of the school. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become confident, fluent readers. Staff deliver the new phonics programme consistently well. Pupils take part in catch-up sessions if they begin to fall behind in reading. Staff give skilful and timely support to help pupils catch up. The school has promoted a love of reading. Most pupils have reading books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. A growing number of pupils are reading fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Some teachers use the mathematics curriculum well to sequence and deliver lessons that effectively build on prior learning. This is not consistent across the school. At times, pupils do not develop their mathematical knowledge in a coherent or logical way. This slows their progress.

The wider curriculum sets out ambitious aims. However, some teachers have not had the support that they need to teach the curriculum well. At times, resources to support learning are not used to full effect. Sometimes, activities do not align with the intended learning. Some adults do not check pupils' understanding carefully

enough. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall and connect their knowledge. As a result, they are not well prepared for the next steps of their education.

There is variability in the quality of support for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school do not precisely identify the barriers to learning for some pupils with SEND. Some adults do not understand how to support pupils with SEND well. As a result, staff do not adapt activities sufficiently to help these pupils. Therefore, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

In some subjects, and in the early years, adults do not carry out detailed checks to see how well the curriculum is being delivered and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement. The checks that are carried out do not provide adults with the relevant information that they need to understand what is going well and what needs to improve. This limits their ability to identify and address any weaknesses in the quality of education.

Some pupils show a positive attitude towards their education. However, too many pupils are not resilient and do not cope well with challenges or engage consistently in lessons. They cause low-level disruption. This behaviour is not always well managed. Some incidents of poor behaviour in the classroom go unchecked.

Pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. Pupils have a limited knowledge of different religions and what makes them distinctive. Pupils can recall general principles but struggle to attribute them to any particular faith.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and health education. They receive opportunities to debate and discuss a range of topics. Pupils develop new interests through the vast array of after-school activities, such as filmmaking, dance and cookery club.

The school works effectively to ensure that they build positive relationships with all of their families. Families value the support that they receive. One parent stated, 'Staff take time to listen to and respond to my concerns.' This view captures the opinions of many parents.

There have been changes to the governing body. It has the skills and systems in place to support the school to improve.

Leaders have created a school where staff are happy and feel valued. Staff say that they are well supported to manage their workload and look after their well-being. They enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff do not have the expertise that they need to implement the curriculum successfully. They do not present subject matter clearly or select the most appropriate activities to support the intended learning. At times, they do not check pupils' understanding systematically or adapt their teaching successfully. This means that pupils do not learn and remember as much as they could. The school should provide training and support for staff so that they have the skills and confidence to help pupils develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- At times, the school does not identify the barriers that pupils with SEND face. This means that staff do not help pupils to overcome these barriers well enough. The school must clearly identify the barriers to learning and support pupils effectively in order to meet their needs and help them to be successful in their learning.
- The school does not evaluate how well the curriculum is being delivered and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement carefully enough. This means that some weaknesses in the curriculum are not sufficiently addressed. Leaders should systematically monitor how well the curriculum is implemented and ensure that weaknesses are identified and addressed more quickly.
- Some pupils do not engage with their lessons consistently well. They are not resilient and find it difficult to persevere with the learning when they face challenges. This disrupts lessons and hinders other pupils' learning. The school should ensure that everyone shares high expectations of pupils' behaviour and promptly tackles any low-level disruptions.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of different faiths, beliefs and religions. Some pupils do not understand or appreciate difference in the world. This means that pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school should strengthen the curriculum so that pupils are better prepared for life in a diverse society.

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	135088
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10257062
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patrick Howarth
Headteacher	Amanda Abbott
Website	www.harrowgatehillpri.darlington.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher was leading the school.
- The school does use one alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has fallen.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and a representative from

the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including science and physical education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding the pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including governors' minutes, school improvement plans and the school's website.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's, pupils' and parents' views. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Mowat	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Grason-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Kerry Partington	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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