

Inspection of Bothal Primary School

Wansbeck Road, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8HZ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this exceptional school. There is an overriding ambition for everyone to 'be the best you can be'. This ambition shines out in all aspects of school life.

Pupils work hard and achieve well in their lessons. They learn about the world of work and the skills that they need to be successful. Consequently, pupils value their education. Almost all take part in clubs and make positive contributions to school life.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is superb. These pupils play a full part in all aspects of school life and achieve very strong outcomes.

Staff and pupils demonstrate great respect for each other. Pupils learn and play together happily throughout the day. Those who are new to the school quickly settle in and make friends.

Staff set high expectations of behaviour. The youngest children are quick to learn routines in the 'Little Learners' class. Pupils learn how to understand their feelings and those of others. Their behaviour in lessons and outside the classroom is exemplary.

Pupils feel safe at school. Incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils are very knowledgeable about risks to their safety when online. They know when and how to seek help if they feel worried or upset.

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

Leadership of the school is visionary. There is an expectation that disadvantage should not be a barrier to success. Academic and pastoral leadership is exceptionally strong. As a result, standards are very high and always improving.

The school curriculum is broad and well sequenced. Staff receive highly effective training and support. Their subject knowledge is exceptional. Teachers know the key learning that pupils need. They make regular checks throughout lessons to make sure that no one falls behind. Pupils show strong understanding of their learning. For example, they create high-quality artwork based on their knowledge of the work of Leonardo Da Vinci.

Pupils with SEND achieve strong outcomes. Staff work well with parents and external agencies to identify barriers. The work to address such barriers is detailed and highly effective. In lessons, staff provide additional support and reassurance. They help pupils with SEND to understand and manage their needs. Pupils learn to select their own specialist equipment if they should need it. They become independent learners and keep up with their peers.

There is a clear ambition that all pupils should be fluent readers by the age of seven. From the moment they arrive in school as 2-year-olds, children enjoy a wide range of texts. They are keen to learn to read in Reception class. All staff receive training to deliver the school's phonics programme. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn and practise sounds. Their reading books and writing activities match the sounds they learn with precision. Any pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive extra phonics sessions to help them catch up.

The school has strong Home School Links with parents. Almost all pupils enjoy reading at home. Every class in the school has reading time at the end of the day. Staff receive excellent training to improve their skills at reading aloud. Pupils value these reading sessions and fondly remember the stories that they have heard. Almost all pupils achieve well in phonics and are fluent readers by the time they start Year 3.

The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced. Teachers introduce new learning clearly. Pupils gain a thorough understanding of mathematical concepts. They have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge through solving problems. The school identified significant gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge following the COVID-19 pandemic. These gaps have closed and pupils achieve high standards in their lessons.

The school's programme for the personal development of pupils is thorough and well planned. Pupils value learning about relationships, staying safe and healthy and developing a positive outlook. They learn about local issues such as rail safety. Pupils are reflective and show a strong understanding of diversity. There is a culture of inclusion and respect for different world views that permeates the school.

Children make a great start to their education in the early years. The curriculum is sequenced from the 2-year-old provision through to Reception class. Staff develop very strong relationships with parents. This helps to identify children's needs early on. Staff are highly skilled at adapting learning to meet these needs. As a result, all children have full access to learning. The early years environment is inspirational. Children develop their skills and vocabulary in themed areas. Staff are adept at developing children's language and social awareness through conversation. Children are very well prepared for key stage 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	122239
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10290111
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	697
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gemma Craik
Executive Headteacher	Louise Hall
Website	www.bothalprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ashington Learning Partnership (ALP) Trust, together with Central Primary School in Ashington. The ALP Trust is a foundation trust overseen by a single governing body.
- The school operates a lower school and an upper school over two sites.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in December 2021.
- The school uses alternative provision from one provider.
- The school offers nursery provision and provision for 2-year-olds.
- The school offers wraparound provision, with a breakfast club and after-school club.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and with governors. The lead inspector also held conversations with representatives of Northumberland Local Authority.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about provision for pupils with SEND and considered relevant documentation and practice.
- Inspectors spoke with teaching and support staff and considered responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with pupils throughout the inspection, both formally and informally, during breaktimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, computing and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, listened to pupils read, talked with pupils and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the content of governing body minutes and other documentation, including reports from external partners.
- To evaluate the school's management of safeguarding, inspectors considered a range of relevant school policies, examined the single central record and the school's procedure for the safer recruitment of staff. Inspectors spoke with leaders about safeguarding procedures. They also spoke with staff, governors and pupils to check their views and understanding of safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour in and outside lessons. Inspectors also considered school behaviour records and spoke with pupils about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school.

Inspection team

Ian Dawson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Sonia Fraser	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Murray	Ofsted Inspector

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