

# Inspection of Cockton Hill Junior School

McIntyre Terrace, Cockton Hill, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6HW

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is an inclusive community school. The school cares about its pupils. It supports parents and carers in overcoming barriers to pupils' education. The school has built strong and trusting relationships with parents. Staff know and understand pupils and their families well. The school works together with parents for the good of each pupil.

The school is ambitious for what pupils can achieve. However, this ambition is not reflected consistently in the school's curriculum. Teaching does not meet all pupils' needs. Too many pupils do not achieve well. Governors have not been effective enough in challenging the school with regard to the quality of education it provides.

Pupils behave well. This is a calm and orderly school where pupils work and play happily together. Moreover, pupils show kindness and respect to each other. They build positive relationships with their peers and with staff.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. This is a 'Rights Respecting School'. The school listens to pupils' views. Pupils take on roles such as school councillor and eco-representative. They also enjoy educational visits to places of cultural interest. These visits enrich pupils' education.

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

The school has established a broad and balanced curriculum. It is developing the curriculum further to ensure that it is ambitious for all pupils. In most subjects, the curriculum is well sequenced. This helps pupils to build their knowledge in a coherent way. In some subjects, such as science and geography, pupils learn to think and work like subject specialists. However, in other subjects, the curriculum does not provide pupils with an appropriate depth of knowledge. It does not help pupils to develop subject-specific skills in a progressive manner.

The teaching of the curriculum is not effective in consistently meeting pupils' needs. Teachers do not adapt their teaching enough to ensure that pupils can secure and extend their learning. Some pupils spend too much time waiting for the next stage of learning to begin. However, teachers do revisit what pupils have learned before. This helps pupils to remember essential knowledge. In some subjects, this is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Pupils learn without disruption. Some, when teaching does not meet their needs, lose focus on their work. They do not secure the essential knowledge they need. The school takes a rigorous approach to pupils' attendance. This helps to improve the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent.

The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. It ensures that pupils get the additional support they need. Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils who need extra help with English

and mathematics get specialist teaching. This teaching accelerates the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils at an early stage of reading learn to read using phonics. They get the extra support with reading that they need. This helps them to become more fluent and confident readers. Pupils read a wide range of texts, including non-fiction and poetry. They read class novels written by a diverse range of authors. The school enriches the reading curriculum through author visits. Pupils talk with interest and enthusiasm about the books they are reading.

The school has developed an age-appropriate personal development programme. Pupils learn about relationships, equality and diversity, and physical and mental health. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. The school's values and work as a Rights Respecting School underpin its approach to the development of pupils' character.

The school intends to provide pupils with a high-quality education. The fundamental curriculum development work that the school is completing reflects that intention. However, a significant proportion of pupils are currently not achieving well. Governors are not effective enough in providing strategic direction for the school. They do not hold the school to account with sufficient rigour.

The school's work with parents to help them support their children's education is considerable. The school looks after its staff well. Staff's workload is manageable and the school promotes staff's well-being.

## **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, the school's curriculum does not provide pupils with an ambitious and well-sequenced course of study. This means that pupils do not build a suitably coherent and deep body of knowledge as they move through the school. The school should ensure that it accelerates current curriculum development work so that all subject curriculums are both ambitious and well sequenced. It should also ensure that the new curriculum builds in a more meaningful and logical way on the prior knowledge of pupils in Year 4 and above.
- The teaching of the curriculum does not meet all pupils' needs. Teachers do not adapt their teaching sufficiently to consolidate, deepen and extend pupils' learning. This results in some pupils not securing basic knowledge and other pupils not gaining the opportunity to reach higher levels of attainment. The school should provide teachers with substantial training and development in pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge. It should prioritise such training

and development and ensure that it is the central focus of the school's professional development programme for teachers.

- Governors do not provide effective strategic direction for the school. They do not hold the school to account with sufficient rigour, particularly with regard to pupils' attainment and progress. This means that school improvement work is not informed by a clear and ambitious vision for what the school wants pupils to achieve. It also means that key areas for improvement are not prioritised with sufficient urgency. This contributes to a lack of improvement in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Governors should ensure that they develop an ambitious vision for the school that helps them to hold the school to account. They should also ensure that they receive and interrogate school attainment and progress data in a systematic way.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 114110   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Durham   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10268106   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 203  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Malcolm Cresswell  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jill Cooper  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.cocktonhill-jun.durham.sch.uk">www.cocktonhill-jun.durham.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 25 and 26 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                            |

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in the substantive role of headteacher since April 2023.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspectors held

discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in art and design, history and geography. They looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects and in English.
- 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 that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Roger Ward

Ofsted Inspector

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