

Inspection of Cockfield Primary School

Front Street, Cockfield, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 5EN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this small village school are happy, confident and inquisitive individuals. They embody the school's values of honesty, respect, kindness, positivity and care. Pupils of all ages are polite and well mannered. They feel very safe at school. Parents, carers and staff agree. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure they know how to keep pupils and themselves safe. Poor behaviour and bullying at this school are rare. Pupils and parents are confident that staff would deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Cockfield is a place where parents are happy to send their children. One parent summed up the feelings of many by saying, 'I am proud my children attend this school.'

Leaders have established high expectations of themselves, of staff and of pupils. This ensures that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are both positive. Pupils show a clear understanding of equality. They demonstrate commendable empathy for others and are respectful to all.

The school occupies a central position within a tightly knit community. Parents feel part of this school community. They believe that staff are approachable and listen to any issues that they may have. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They describe the school as being like 'one big family'.

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

From children's first days in Nursery, the school identifies and meets their needs well. The support and education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. Where appropriate, the school seeks advice and support from external professionals to further strengthen this provision. Support for pupils with SEND is personalised to remove barriers to achievement for these pupils. Staff put appropriate extra resources in place to enable pupils to access learning alongside their peers.

Reading is promoted well throughout the school. With a sharp focus on communication and language in early years, children develop effective speaking and listening skills. Across the school, the purposeful teaching of phonics ensures that most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the time they reach key stage 2. When needed, extra support from well-trained staff helps pupils who may be falling behind with phonics to catch up. However, some younger pupils struggle to retain what they have learned. Opportunities to secure and embed knowledge are not planned with consistency. This means that these pupils do not make the progress that leaders expect.

Children in early years enjoy high-quality experiences and become confident and considerate members of the school community. Children talk with excitement about their play and their learning. Staff help children to develop their knowledge and skills and become enthusiastic learners. Children make good progress and are ready for learning in Year 1 and beyond.

Most subjects in the curriculum are carefully designed and sequenced. Pupils build a rich understanding of their learning and develop strong knowledge and skills. They talk about their learning in a range of different subject areas with genuine understanding. The school's religious education curriculum positively supports pupils' appreciation of other faiths and religions. In mathematics, the planned curriculum is not consistently implemented as leaders intend. Where this is the case, pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning and do not achieve as well as they could.

The school takes effective action to address pupils' absence, including persistent absence. These actions are successfully helping to improve attendance and reduce the number of absences. The school engages well with families to promote the importance of attendance.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is strong. Close links with the local church ensure that pupils benefit from effective spiritual development. They develop commendable attitudes towards equality and diversity. Pupils were unanimous in their belief that everyone at Cockfield is treated the same. For example, when asked about racial equality, a typical comment described it as being 'like 8/32 or 4/16 – they might look different but they're the same'. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about the opportunities they have within school. These include roles as house captains and members of the school council. Pupils fulfil responsibilities as peer mentors with pride. They work alongside the school's mental health leader to help other pupils.

Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's priorities. Staff feel supported in their roles. They are adamant that leaders promote the well-being of staff and try to reduce their workload wherever possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in mathematics is not being consistently implemented in line with the school's intent. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not receive work at an appropriate level and make less progress than they could. The school must ensure that teaching and learning in mathematics matches more closely the school's intent.
- Some younger pupils do not retain phonics knowledge sufficiently well. This has a negative impact on their acquisition and application of phonics to learn to read. The school should strengthen their approach to practising and embedding phonics knowledge and check how well pupils are remembering and applying phonics to ensure that all pupils learn to read as quickly as possible.

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	114114
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10290021
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Michael Goy
Headteacher	Mrs Nicky Wright
Website	http://www.cockfield.durham.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2011

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2023.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the 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 staff, representatives of the governing body and some parents.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, 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 pupil's work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupil's work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, met with those responsible for safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil online surveys and Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Cottrell

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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