

Inspection of Hipsburn Primary School

Lesbury, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3PX

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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 fourteen 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. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Hipsburn Primary school achieve well. Leaders are ambitious about what they want pupils to learn. The school ensures that pupils are well prepared to take their next steps in education.

Pupils in this small primary school have a strong understanding of their community. All pupils regularly attend beach school, where they learn about and help to protect their local environment. The youngest children enjoy accessing the outdoor forest space, where they learn about and engage with nature. Beach school and forest school encourage a love of the outdoors and promote well-being.

Staff know pupils and their families well. Parents and carers appreciate the school's caring and nurturing environment. Pupils enjoy attending school and do so regularly. Pupils feel safe here and are confident in talking to adults if they are worried. They trust adults to help and keep them safe. Pupils here explain well how people treat each other kindly. They have a strong understanding of equality and respect. Bullying is not a problem at Hipsburn Primary School. On the rare occasions it happens, staff sort it out quickly and effectively.

Pupils here are encouraged to succeed, in both their learning and their attitudes. Pupils value the rewards systems in school. They enjoy earning jewels to help their crew be the most successful. Pupils behave well.

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

The school has carefully considered what it wants pupils to learn across subjects. This knowledge is mapped out so that pupils' learning builds on what they already know and remember. Leaders have ensured that this is the case for all pupils in mixed-age classes through strategic adaptations to the curriculum. The curriculum thinking is ambitious and ensures that pupils develop strong foundations on which to build future learning. This is particularly the case in mathematics and history. In these subjects, pupils talk articulately about the Great Fire of London and mathematical problem-solving. Leaders have decided what vocabulary pupils will learn across all subject areas.

Pupils access a wide range of opportunities outside the classroom to bring their learning to life. For example, pupils make progress working with local artists and visiting the Bailiffgate Museum to learn about local history.

The school has established an environment where reading is important and valued. Pupils discuss the lessons they learn from stories that adults read to them every day. They explain thoroughly what they have learned about diversity from reading about important historical figures. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of being librarians. The school has a well-established phonics scheme in place to teach pupils to read. However, phonics is not delivered consistently well. Some staff's subject knowledge around the delivery of phonics is not secure.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to learn alongside their peers. Teachers are quick to spot pupils who may have SEND, especially in the early years. Leaders keep track of how best to support these pupils.

In classrooms, teachers check what pupils remember through questioning and recap activities. Teachers spot gaps in pupils' learning and address these effectively. Teachers use assessment in phonics and mathematics to check pupils' knowledge effectively. However, in some foundation subjects, there are no assessment systems in place to help teachers check what pupils have learned and remembered over time.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, they are generally focused and engaged. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy being in school. They are rewarded, in the weekly celebration assembly, for displaying effective learning behaviours, including resilience, resourcefulness and respect. Even younger children in the early years show resilience. They enjoy being outdoors in the forest space and working together to solve problems.

The school ensures that pupils access a range of learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Leaders and pupils have created the 'Hipsburn promise'. The promise ensures that all pupils access the same range of experiences during their time at the school. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about residential visits and the beach school. Pupils benefit from learning about the world of work and the range of jobs available. They hear from a wide range of professionals first hand, including police officers, artists, firefighters and radiographers.

Pupils have a strong understanding of tolerance, respect and equality. They understand the ways in which people are different from each other and deserve to be treated equally. They model this learning well in their own behaviours and relationships.

Governors are closely involved in the life of the school. Staff feel well supported and enjoy working in this school. Leaders are aware of staff's workload and have made changes to help them manage it. The school has introduced new systems for monitoring the quality and impact of the curriculum. These systems are still in their infancy. They are not providing leaders with all the information they need about how to refine and improve the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A culture of safeguarding exists in school. Staff are vigilant and know what signs to look out for and report. Pupils are safe and feel safe. Although staff members act diligently to keep pupils safe, gaps in record-keeping mean that supervision of this area needs to be further strengthened.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite the secure safeguarding culture in school, there are some weaknesses in record-keeping. The current system makes it difficult for leaders to identify patterns and/or trends. On occasion, the logging of leaders' actions is not thorough enough. The school should ensure that there are robust record-keeping systems in place.
- Phonics is not delivered consistently well. This means that some pupils do not receive the most effective support when they are learning to read. The school should ensure that staff receive additional training to deliver the school's chosen phonics scheme well.
- The school has not developed clear assessment systems in some foundation subjects. This means that teachers are not able to check what pupils have remembered over time. The school should ensure that assessment processes are in place across the curriculum to give staff accurate information about what pupils have learned.
- Recently introduced systems for monitoring across the school are in the early stages of development. This means that some leaders do not have an accurate picture of the impact of the curriculum. The school should ensure that monitoring procedures give leaders the information they need about the quality of the school's provision.

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	122264
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10242446
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Allison Wort
Headteacher	Kevin Moloney
Website	www.hipsburn.northumberland.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 March 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has changed from a first school to a primary school.
- The school has nursery provision which takes children from two years old.
- 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.

- This is 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. They met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. As part of the deep dives, 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of local governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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