

Inspection of a good school: Allendale Primary School

Allendale, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 9PS

Inspection date: 15 November 2023

Outcome

Allendale Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school at the heart of the community. It has a warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of school life. There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved with local community events. For example, pupils' artwork is displayed in a local exhibition and, as part of the history club, pupils enjoy local history walks.

There has been a focus on ensuring that pupils are supported to behave well. In classrooms and around the school, pupils conduct themselves appropriately. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and staff are consistent with routines. Pupils play well together and are focused in lessons the vast majority of the time.

There is an ambitious curriculum in place for pupils. This includes many opportunities to extend the curriculum beyond the academic. Pupils discuss with enthusiasm the clubs and activities that they attend. These include Lego club, gymnastics and recycling clubs. Pupils take on leadership roles such as school councillors and house captains. Pupils are proud to hold these roles and to be an important part of the school community.

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

There has been work of late to develop the curriculum. In the mathematics curriculum design, there is now better sequencing of knowledge and skills. This helps pupils to progress through the curriculum. There is continuing work to appropriately challenge pupils in mathematics. This is beginning to have a positive impact. In some foundation curriculum subjects, specific knowledge is not clearly linked. This includes too few opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning.

Children in Reception get off to a strong start. There are many opportunities to develop early interest in stories, songs and rhymes. Staff are quick to identify children who may need additional support with speech and language development. Staff encourage children to become independent learners. This prepares them well for Year 1.

The school includes pupils with SEND well. Their needs are identified and staff put appropriate support in place. This includes the effective deployment of teaching assistants. Staff have a clear understanding of any adjustments needed to enable pupils to access the curriculum.

There is a sharp focus on the teaching of reading and phonics. Staff ensure that children in the early years learn the sounds that letters make. Staff model how to pronounce pure sounds effectively. Staff use consistent strategies that provide pupils with opportunities to practise the new sounds that they learn. They are quick to notice if a pupil does not pronounce a sound correctly. Pupils who need additional support receive it. This ensures that they catch up quickly. Staff use regular assessment to ensure that pupils' work is matched precisely to their phonics knowledge. Older pupils enjoy reading. They enjoy taking part in reading quizzes about books that they have read. Many pupils discussed reading at home every night and the school encourages this. The vast majority of pupils become fluent and confident readers.

The school ensures that pupils behave well. Pupils cooperate with each other and treat each other with respect. There has been significant work by leaders to ensure that pupils are taught strategies to regulate their behaviour if needed. There are very few behavioural incidents as the school teaches pupils to behave well and to be kind to each other.

There is a comprehensive personal, social, and health education (PHSE) curriculum in place. Pupils have secure knowledge of fundamental British values. They discuss these confidently. Leaders ensure that there is a balance between exploring local cultures and worldwide cultures. This supports pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy educational visits to broaden their horizons. These include local sites such as The Sill and places linked to wider curriculum areas such as The Life Science Centre.

Governors perform their duties well. They hold leaders to account and support with the school's strategic direction. Parents are involved in the wider life of the school. Parents can use online systems to watch their children being taught new sounds. The school is involved with many community events such as recycling and collecting clothing for charity. Staff feel valued. They enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made clear enough the precise content that they want pupils to know and revisit in some curriculum subjects. Pupils do not make crucial connections between the component knowledge that they are taught. Leaders should ensure that

they identify the knowledge that pupils need to learn, step by step and revisit in all subjects, as they progress through the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2014.

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	122171
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10297326
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	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cheryl Litster-Smith
Headteacher	Alison Hawkins
Website	www.allendaleprimary.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. 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 looked at samples of pupils' work in geography and history.

- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanne Shaw

Ofsted Inspector

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