

Inspection of Escomb Primary School

Three Lane Ends, Escomb, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 7SR

Inspection dates:

21 to 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Escomb Primary is a caring environment. Pupils are safe and enjoy coming to school. There are highly positive relationships between pupils, staff and parents. Pupils understand the school's expectations for behaviour. They behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. Pupils appreciate the rewards given to individuals and classes to celebrate positive behaviour.

The flying start children make in early years is not sustained in the older year groups. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not always taught in a way that is well-matched to their needs. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and misunderstandings. Some pupils are not challenged in their lessons sufficiently well.

Pupils understand and appreciate different cultures. They learn the values of respect and tolerance through assemblies and lessons. Pupils also enjoy opportunities that help them to develop their life skills. This includes being buddies to younger children, joining the school council and supporting local charities. Pupils relish the opportunity to perform in school productions on the outdoor stage.

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

There have been recent changes in leadership at the school. Leaders are putting changes in place to improve the quality of education for pupils. The impact of this work is not fully realised for all pupils. The subject curriculum is not sufficiently well developed. In some subjects, leaders have not identified the core knowledge and concepts that pupils need to know. In addition, leaders do not ensure that staff understand how to teach the curriculum well. Teachers do not always match the delivery of the curriculum to the needs of the pupils. This includes pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils struggle to recall what has been taught. Some pupils develop misconceptions and have gaps in their understanding. There are inconsistencies in the ways in which teachers check what pupils have learned. However, the curriculum in early years is ambitious. The goals of this curriculum are clear. Leaders ensure that the resources and activities in the provision support their aims.

The school has not developed a sufficiently effective mathematics curriculum. This means some pupils are not ready for their next stage of learning. Teachers address gaps in mathematical knowledge in the classroom. However, pupils' progress through the rest of the mathematics curriculum is slow. Children in early years build strong foundations for future mathematics learning. Teachers in this setting support learning in mathematics with thoughtful resources and activities, for example, cutting out and naming properties of shapes. The children can articulate their secure knowledge of different colours and shapes.

Leaders have taken focused action to improve early reading. Children in early years are well-prepared to become confident and fluent readers. Provision for pupils throughout the school is closely monitored. When pupils fall behind, they receive

purposeful and timely support to catch up. Leaders ensure that staff delivering phonics are well-trained. Pupils enjoy their phonics lessons and read suitable books with increasing fluency.

The school has high expectations for pupils' conduct. Staff manage low-level disruption effectively, using the school's clear behaviour policy. Pupils understand the school's new behaviour expectations. They know that poor behaviour is not tolerated in the school. Leaders take fair and appropriate action when pupils do break the rules. Pupils are positive about their education. They behave well and have high levels of attendance.

Staff in the early years place a strong emphasis on children's personal development. Children learn the importance of being kind and sharing. They do this within a caring and nurturing environment. This emphasis on personal development continues for older pupils. Pupils learn about online safety. They can confidently tell others how to keep themselves safe. They also experience a range of visitors who help them learn about risks in their community. For example, pupils learn about dangers associated with railways.

Staff and parents are positive about new leadership in the school. Parents appreciate the improved communication they receive. Staff are confident that there are now clear steps in place to support their well-being at work. However, governors do not have a clear understanding of what is happening in the school. They do not have a structured approach to gathering useful information. This means they are not informed well enough to fulfil their duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not benefit consistently from an effective mathematics curriculum. Too many pupils are not ready for their next phase of learning. Leaders should ensure a robust curriculum is developed rapidly and that staff are trained to deliver it well.
- Staff do not make appropriate pedagogical choices in the classroom. Some pupils, including those with SEND, do not make sufficient progress through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff are supported to deploy more effective pedagogical approaches matched to the needs of pupils.
- Methods for assessing pupils' progress are not embedded across the curriculum. Some pupils develop misconceptions and have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure an effective range of assessment strategies are used consistently to inform future learning.

- Governors do not have the information and structures to check the effectiveness of provision in their areas of responsibility. Governors do not have a full understanding of the strengths and challenges in the school. They should improve systems and processes for gathering information to support them in fulfilling their duties.

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	114103
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10268095
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Jennifer Tremewan
Headteacher	Emma Woodhouse
Website	www.escomb.durham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher of the school took up post in September 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider of education.

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 COVID-19 pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met a representative from the local authority.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and three governing body members. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governing body meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and music. 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 pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and considered the support given to pupils with SEND during lesson visits.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires, including Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents during pupils' arrival to and departure from school.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Cook

His Majesty's Inspector

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