

# Inspection of a good school: Wessington Primary School

Lanercost, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 7PY

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 November 2023

## Outcome

Wessington Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Wessington are happy, friendly and welcoming. They chat freely with visitors and are inquisitive. They feel comfortable and nurtured in school as a result of very positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils feel safe in school. Parents agree. The staff in this well-trained team are relentless in their commitment to keeping pupils safe.

Leaders have very high expectations for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well catered for here. Bullying is rare. Pupils and parents believe that staff would deal with it quickly and effectively if it did occur. Behaviour and attitudes in and around the school are positive. Although persistent absence remains higher than the national average, leaders do all they can to improve attendance rates.

Pupils are proud to be members of the school community. There is a tangible sense of equality and fairness throughout the school. Pupils embody this. They show high levels of empathy. Pupils' attitudes towards one another are commendable. When asked to name the best thing about the school, one pupil summed up the responses of many by saying that 'the teachers care about you'.

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

From their first days in school, children settle into the routines and expectations of school life. They benefit from a language-rich environment where well-trained adults use questioning to help pupils understand and learn through carefully planned activities. The regular forest school provision allows children to develop independence and resilience. The learning environment for children who are two years old is equipped with age-appropriate and inviting activities.

Pupils in school enjoy many opportunities to develop a love of reading. They display positive attitudes to reading. A clear focus on communication and language in early years prepares pupils well for formal phonics teaching. Consistent and effective phonics teaching enables pupils to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become fluent readers. Staff all demonstrate secure subject knowledge and fidelity to the school's phonics programme. Where pupils may be struggling, staff provide effective support to ensure that pupils can keep up with their peers. Outcomes in reading reflect the positive long-term impact of the phonics and reading curriculum.

The mathematics curriculum is also well sequenced and effective. Staff ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to revisit prior learning. This allows them to form firm foundations in mathematics so that they can quickly grasp new mathematical concepts. The school is offering more opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding in mathematics. This is part of an initiative to increase the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher standard in mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. This includes support for children within the early years setting. Well-trained staff have a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs. The majority of pupils with SEND access an age-appropriate curriculum. Staff use adaptations and adult support carefully to enable pupils to access the curriculum. Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum that is closely tailored to their needs. In one class visited, pupils talked with excitement about a practical activity. This involved them using their reading and mathematical skills to follow a recipe and make gingerbread.

The school has recently introduced new curriculums in the foundation subjects. These new curriculums are comprehensive and well planned. They include references to the local area and its heritage. The intentions of leaders for pupils' learning are clear. These curriculums have carefully planned opportunities for educational visits and visitors to enhance learning. However, as these curriculums are in the early stages of implementation, it is too early to assess how well pupils are acquiring crucial knowledge.

Leaders consider pupils' wider development carefully. Pupils have opportunities to take on a responsibility, including a school councillor, eco warrior or a member of the 'Rights Respecting School' group. Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational visits linked to the wider curriculum, including a visit to the local glass centre and residential visits.

Leaders at all levels engage with staff well. This means that staff feel well supported in school. Staff were universal in their view that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Governors are well informed and hold leaders to account. They have active roles in the life of the school and have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development as a result.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Foundation subject curriculums have been very recently reviewed and refined. There has not been sufficient time for staff to measure how well these changes have improved pupils' knowledge acquisition. The school should ensure that the recently revised curriculum is fully implemented and embedded so that all pupils acquire the crucial knowledge that leaders have identified across the foundation subjects.

## 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 November 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134532
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290145
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michael Potter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anna Young
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wessingtonprimary.org.uk">www.wessingtonprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- There is school-led wraparound care on site.

## 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff, representatives of the governing body, representatives from two local authorities and some parents.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector listened to some pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector 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

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