

Inspection of a good school: Hetton Primary School

Moorsley Road, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear DH5 9ND

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 February 2024

Outcome

Hetton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hetton Primary School is typified by warm and trusting relationships. Pupils enjoy being in school and take pleasure in the simplest of things, such as whizzing around the yard on a wheeled bodyboard. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and give their best. Pupils develop a motivation to succeed. Career aspirations include being a police officer, teacher, electrician or firefighter.

Behaviour is of a high standard. Pupils work with interest and enthusiasm in lessons, achieving well. All know the 'golden rules', such as, 'Be the best you can be,' or, 'Be kind with words and actions.' The introduction of exciting new activities has transformed outdoor time. Pupils build with barrels and crates, dress up, expend energy on the trim trail and play small-side games on the multi-use games area, including on 'football-free Friday'. Adults quickly resolve occasional disputes using six familiar questions, such as 'What were you thinking at the time?'.

Very rare bullying incidents are dealt with swiftly and fairly. Pupils feel safe in school, pointing to the new building's security systems and having adults around. Pupils' well-being and mental health are important to the school. Pupils do not hesitate to share a worry with a trusted adult or ask to speak with the school counsellor.

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

The school's exciting curriculum meets pupils' specific needs. It allows pupils to think for themselves and brings learning to life. Its challenging end-points mean that pupils leave school with the foundations to succeed. The curriculum fosters pupils' curiosity, promoting a desire to learn. The school sees a broad bank of subject-based and technical vocabulary as essential. In most subjects, key ideas link knowledge. This helps pupils to know and remember more. There is a sharp focus on the essential knowledge pupils need to take forward at the end of each short unit of work. Not all subjects are equally well structured,

however, meaning that there is an inconsistency of approach in some parts of the curriculum.

The school uses assessment effectively. Termly checks mean that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding can be addressed. Daily checks result in pupils who are at risk of falling behind being given extra help. Checks in lessons for common errors provide a chance to pause and develop pupils' understanding. The school is skilled at identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Working closely with parents and carers, the school designs specific plans to make sure that every single pupil with SEND can be the best they can be. Most learn the same curriculum as their classmates. The adaptation of tasks through work being presented or recorded in different ways, using word banks or memory joggers, opens up learning for all.

Pupils make a fast start in reading, quickly becoming confident and fluent readers and reading most words by sight. Children in the provision for two-year-olds sit quietly to enjoy stories together. Children in Nursery look at books and sing or repeat rhymes. Phonics teaching starts in Nursery in the summer term. Most children already know many of the sounds that letters represent, blending them together to read words. Daily systematic phonics lessons use the same mantras and phrases. Sessions run like clockwork. Pupils take books home that match their reading ability and other books to share with an adult.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive. Almost everyone is keen to learn. Children in the base for two-year-olds are settled and cooperative and have learned to follow instructions and listen. This continues through early years and beyond. Pupils' good behaviour means that lessons run smoothly and without interruption. The school works hard to make sure that every pupil's attendance is good, meaning a swift return to pre-pandemic attendance levels.

The school provides a wide range of activities, visits and opportunities to develop pupils' character and their understanding of wider issues. A weekly key question raised in assembly offers pupils the chance to respond with a written comment. Issues are often related to different countries, cultures or religions. The current question is, 'How [can you] make your voice heard?', while last week it was, 'Should we all learn Sign Language?'. Pupils visit places of natural beauty and explore their historical heritage, including of mining and Roman remains. The school encourages and facilitates links to local clubs to untap pupils' hidden potential, such as through swimming, cheerleading, dancing and a range of sports. The school is a key part of the community. A singing performance at a local cathedral, taking part in carnivals and parades, and donations to the local food bank typify its involvement.

Morale in school is very positive. Staff applaud leaders' efforts to reduce their workload. Staff are unequivocal that colleagues are supportive and pull together. Governors prioritise staff well-being, promoting a special half-day for well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few foundation subjects are not as well structured as they need to be. In these subjects, the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember and the key concepts that link knowledge are unclear. This limits pupils' ability to connect new knowledge with previous learning and to remember more over time. The school should ensure that all subjects are equally well designed so that all pupils can learn and thrive across the whole curriculum and remember more of what they have learned.

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 January 2015.

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	108803
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10320351
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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maureen Wren
Headteacher	Nicola Hill
Website	www.hettonprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has moved to a new building since the previous inspection.
- The school offers provision for two-year-olds and has a Nursery unit for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector also met with teachers and a range of support staff.
- The inspector met six members of the local governing body, including the chair, and spoke to the local authority school improvement officer.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at curriculum documents and spoke to leaders about a range of other curriculum subjects.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils from different year groups reading.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, in breakfast club, and at breaktime and lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- 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 views of parents through the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the views of pupils who had responded to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector considered the well-being and workload of staff. He took note of the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey, including comments made by staff about their well-being.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024