

# Inspection of Bloemfontein Primary School

The Middles, Craghead, Stanley, County Durham DH9 6AG

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
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Previous inspection grade	Inadequate
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The headteacher of this school is Anne-Marie Lewis. This school is part of Stanley Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Stewart, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Harpe.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. They respond well to the high expectations set by teachers for both learning and behaviour. Pupils are challenged by the school curriculum to think deeply about their learning and to make connections with what they already know. There is a calm, purposeful working environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school where they feel safe and well cared for.

The youngest children in the early years love being in class and are eager to learn. They are well supported and guided by adults in their learning activities. Children in the early years have many opportunities to observe the awe and wonder of nature, for example observing chicks hatch in class. They are well prepared for their learning in key stage 1.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in modern-day Britain are at the heart of the school's personal development offer. Pupils recall their learning about equalities and fundamental British values well. They know why these aspects are important. Pupils look forward to the school camp, residentials and active outdoor activities. They relish the extra responsibilities they have, for example being sports leaders or librarians.

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

Bloemfontein Primary School has undergone significant change since the last full inspection. All the areas identified for improvement have been successfully actioned. This has improved the quality of education for pupils significantly.

Reading is given high priority. The youngest children benefit from following carefully chosen stories, rhymes and songs. In the Reception class, children learn phonics sounds speedily. They read books matched to the sounds that they know with confidence. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are less fluent readers catch up quickly. Staff deliver the phonics programme consistently. The reading curriculum for older pupils is well designed. Pupils access ambitious texts that broaden their experience of the wider world.

Pupils apply their reading knowledge when writing. They take care in choosing words and crafting sentences. However, some older pupils do not form or join letters correctly. This slows down the writing process. Some pupils produce shorter pieces of work in which their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not used fully.

The school has had a sharp focus on improving pupils' learning in mathematics. Pupils are developing a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Staff support pupils in connecting their learning by the consistent use of models and pictorial representations. Pupils are working at an age-appropriate level in mathematics. Those pupils in Year 6 are close to completing the key stage 2 programmes of study.

The trust has supported the school to revise the curriculums for subjects beyond English, mathematics and science. Teachers now know exactly what content they need to teach. Due to the limitations of the previous curriculum, some pupils struggle to remember the content of topics that they have been taught in the past. The school has strong systems in place for checking what pupils know and identifying what they should learn next. These are helping to close any gaps in pupils' learning. It is too soon to assess the impact of the curriculum changes.

The early years classrooms are vibrant, engaging environments. Staff are warm and caring. Children thrive in learning new vocabulary and communicating with one another. This is because staff model talking and encourage conversation readily. They are adept at intervening in children's play at the right time to support discussion and deeper thinking. Although the outdoor learning environment has been improved, there is still more to do to bring it in line with the indoor provision.

The school makes sure that pupils' individual needs are accurately identified and met. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive timely and effective support. This varies and includes adult assistance in class and working independently with a series of prompts.

The well-established personal development programme provides pupils with a broad range of experiences that they would not otherwise receive. Pupils particularly enjoy educational visits such as going to the theatre. Pupils learn about healthy relationships as well as looking after their own physical and mental well-being. Pupils develop deep respect for one another and the staff team. Pupils attend school regularly and have very positive attitudes towards learning.

Since the previous inspection, leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of new leaders and trustees who bring a wealth of relevant experience. They are clear about what is working well and what still needs to change. There is effective support for teachers, and leaders are considerate of their teachers' workload. Staff are proud of the changes they have made.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Many aspects of the school's curriculum and processes are new. The impact of these changes is not fully understood or realised. The school should continue its work to build staff knowledge and capacity so that their ambitious vision is implemented, evaluated and refined consistently well.
- The school's approach to teaching handwriting is not having the intended impact in key stage 2. As a result, some pupils' handwriting is under-developed. The

school should ensure that the teaching of handwriting, including letter formation, continues to be prioritised.

- The outdoor provision in early years is not of the same standard as the indoor environment. This means that children are not experiencing as rich a learning experience in the outdoors area as the school would like them to. The school should continue to improve the quality of children’s outdoor learning experience.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145983
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10310631
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Tom Harpe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne-Marie Lewis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bloemfonteinprimary.co.uk">www.bloemfonteinprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been many recent changes in staffing, including a new leadership team. The headteacher has been in post since May 2023.
- The school uses one alternative provider of education.
- This school is one of 10 schools in the Stanley Learning Partnership multi-academy trust.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the fourth 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with some support staff.
- The lead inspector met also with representatives of Stanley Learning Partnership and members of the interim governing board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into English, including early reading, mathematics, computing and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at pupils' books and samples of their work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- 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.
- As well as speaking to parents at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors took the views of staff into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Cook, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise Mallin	Ofsted Inspector
Deb Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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