

Inspection of NCEA Thomas Bewick C of E Primary School

Moorhouse Lane, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 9LP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jessica Hodson. This school is part of Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Alan Hardie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Brearley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school embody the school's LIGHT values, which include love and hope. They are proud, happy and confident members of the school community. They show compassion for others. Relationships across school are positive. Well-trained and dedicated staff are determined to keep pupils safe. Pupils appreciate the pastoral support that the school puts in place. They know that the sensory and rainbow rooms are quiet spaces they can go to if they need to.

Pupils enjoy numerous opportunities to contribute to the wider community beyond the school gates. For example, pupils engage in an oral history project with members of the 'Ashington Veterans and Elders Institute'. Pupils are due to present their learning to members of the institute when the project is complete.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils strive to meet these high expectations. Leaders put appropriate support in place for those pupils who may struggle with this more than their peers. This support has a positive impact. Bullying is rare. If allegations are made, the school takes swift and effective action to deal with this.

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

The school's provision for early years, including for two-year-olds, is well planned and implemented. It is of high quality. There is a clear and effective focus on communication and language. Well-trained adults carefully model ambitious language and vocabulary. They question children well and engage them in meaningful conversations. The learning environments are engaging, vibrant and well resourced. This enhances children's learning and understanding. A small group of children in Reception were captivated by a science investigation around floating and sinking. They were keen to make informed predictions as to what they thought would happen. The progress children make from low starting points is positive.

Pupils have a tangible love of books. Pupils' enjoyment of reading was summed up by one pupil's comment that, when reading, 'it feels you're going into your own little world'. This is because there has been a clear focus on promoting the love of reading and high-quality phonics provision in school. The sequencing of the phonics programme helps pupils to develop a secure base of phonic knowledge. This allows them to develop into confident, fluent readers. However, in some lessons, staff do not address misconceptions that pupils may have, such as applying their phonics knowledge to spelling.

Across the school, leaders have constructed a well-sequenced series of curriculums. These meet children's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make adaptations to the curriculum to give all pupils equality of opportunity. The heritage of the local area is woven through many curriculum areas. This makes learning relevant for pupils. As a result, engagement in learning is generally high. Pupils talk about their learning with understanding.

However, the work that the school has done to improve provision in reading, writing and mathematics is taking time to embed securely. Pupils' outcomes in national assessments do not currently reflect the progress that they are making.

Pupils enjoy attending school. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils. For example, they help younger pupils in the lunch hall. Pupils understand the behaviour systems in school well. Staff use these systems fairly and consistently. Most pupils attend regularly. Leaders do all they can to secure improved attendance for the small proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

Pupils at Thomas Bewick develop an appropriate awareness of different religions, faiths and beliefs. As a result of the quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education that they receive, pupils develop high levels of respect and appreciation for others. Curriculums across school provide opportunities for pupils to engage in debate and discussion. They know how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including when using online technology. Very young children in the lunch hall talk about making 'healthy picnics' using fruit and vegetables. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs and extra-curricular opportunities, including playing recorder, clarinet and clarinet. Leaders target some clubs and activities at specific groups pupils to promote their well-being.

Leaders at all levels have a keen understanding of the school. Trustees and governors get the information they need to offer support, challenge and strategic direction to leaders. They hold leaders to account effectively. Staff are proud to be part of the school community. They feel very well supported with their workload and well-being. Parents are supportive of the school. Leaders work effectively to engage them. One parent summed up the thoughts of many by saying, 'It's great to see a school that takes care of its pupils as well as parents. They encourage the children to let their light shine.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, teachers do not check pupil's ability to apply their phonic knowledge to spelling carefully enough. Therefore, some misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge persist. The school should ensure that their checks identify the areas that pupils need to re-visit, so that pupils make rapid progress.

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	148766
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10323147
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Brearley
CEO of the trust	Alan Hardie
Headteacher	Jessica Hodson
Website	https://thomasbewick.ncea.org.uk/
Date(s) of previous inspection	25 August 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school opened in September 2021 following the de-amalgamation of the predecessor academy, NCEA Bishop's Primary School.
- The inspection in August 2021 was for pre-registration as part of the de-amalgamation process.
- This school is part of Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not yet had its first section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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.
- 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, other school leaders, school staff, some parents, representatives of the governing body, representatives of the board of trustees, other representatives of the trust, the CEO and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors also met with leaders and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the online staff survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katrina Morley

Ofsted Inspector

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