

Inspection of Ox Close Primary School

Ox Close Crescent, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 6RU

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ox Close Primary School are happy and safe. They are nurtured by caring staff. The school has high expectations of pupils. Pupils know what the expectations are and they rise to them. Lessons are calm and productive. Pupils are extremely polite and very courteous. They have a clear understanding of the school's 'ENRICHED' values. On the rare occasion that bullying happens, the school responds effectively. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and trusting.

The school is aspirational for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are encouraged to be 'the best that they can be'. Pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, are supported well. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in national tests in 2023 is in line with the national average. Pupils learn about different careers. They have recently enjoyed visits from the fire brigade, paramedics and members of the armed forces.

Pupils enjoy a range of ways to contribute to school life. They take on the role of play leaders to support younger children at playtime and they can be members of the student leadership team. Pupils visit care homes and litter pick in the local community.

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

Pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. In each subject, the school has identified the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. In some subjects, like mathematics, this knowledge is precise and builds clearly over time. For example, in mathematics, leaders have ensured that the curriculum regularly includes problem-solving tasks at appropriate points. In some foundation subjects, sometimes it is not clear in curriculum planning what different-aged pupils should know and remember, when they are taught in mixed-aged classes. As a result, the curriculum in these subjects is not meeting some pupils' needs.

Teachers explain concepts clearly. The school helps pupils to remember the curriculum over time. For example, lessons often begin with 'sticky starters'. These help pupils to recall what they have been taught before. Sometimes, the curriculum and the way it is taught does not allow some pupils to explore some subjects in greater depth. This limits the progress that some pupils make, especially those pupils who are most able. Pupils with SEND are supported very well. Teachers have detailed plans that outline pupils' needs. Teachers make effective adaptations to the curriculum so that pupils can succeed. The school draws on the expertise of other professionals when it is needed.

Reading is a priority in the school. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading follow an appropriate phonics programme. Due to high-quality training, this is consistently well taught. Staff assess pupils regularly. They use this information to swiftly identify the pupils who are falling behind. The support the school puts in place ensures that

pupils catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy reading. The school ensures that pupils regularly get to read for pleasure.

The early years setting is an exciting place to be. It nurtures children's curiosity and imagination. For example, children make magic potions and fruit tea in the mud kitchen. Adults involve themselves in play skilfully. They model vocabulary and sentences effectively. Early writing and mathematics activities are prominent in the setting. Some of the most able children are not working at a deeper level that they are capable of.

Pupils behave very well. School routines are well embedded, including in the early years. Pupils follow instructions. At social times, pupils engage in harmonious and happy play. The pupils who are play leaders ensure that younger children have fun. They are positive role models. Pupils attend well. The school has robust plans to support the most vulnerable pupils whose attendance is a concern. This work is having a positive impact.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils appreciate the differences in other people. They enjoy the school's Pride celebrations. They learn about racism. Pupils' understanding of protected characteristics is well developed. The personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum is planned carefully. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They know about healthy relationships.

The school is led very well. Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They are highly skilled. They challenge and support school leaders. Governors fulfil their statutory duties in relation to equalities well.

Staff are positive about working at the school. They have benefited from high-quality training. Staff appreciate the steps leaders have taken to support them with their workload and well-being. For example, staff appreciate the recent review of the marking policy. They are grateful for the 'me days' that give them time to focus on their own priorities and 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)

- The curriculum and the way it is implemented does not always allow pupils to explore some subjects in as much depth as they are capable of. This limits the progress some pupils make, including in the early years. The school should

ensure that the curriculum and the way it is implemented allows pupils, especially the most able, to learn in greater depth.

- In some foundation subjects that are taught in mixed-aged classes, it is not always clear what different-aged pupils should know and be able to do. This means that the curriculum is not meeting the needs of some pupils. The school should further refine its foundation curriculum to ensure that there is greater precision in planning for mixed-aged classes so that it meets all pupils' needs.

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	114091
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10320361
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pam Sneath
Headteacher	Anna Bowden (Acting Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.ox-close.durham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Ox Close Federation with Oxclose Nursery.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The Acting Executive Headteacher took up the post in February 2024.

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.
- 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 inspection team held meetings with leaders, teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector met with the chair and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and art and design. 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 discussed the curriculum in science and religious education with subject leaders.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of the PSHE curriculum, pupils' personal development and careers.
- An inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times. They spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- 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 lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Dan McKeating, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Phil Scott	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Piper	Ofsted Inspector

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