

Inspection of Durham Newton Hall Infants' School

Langley Road, Newton Hall, Durham DH1 5LP

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
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?

Everyone is welcome at Newton Hall Infants' School. Leaders and staff care strongly about pupils and know them as individuals. There is a culture of kindness. Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they know staff support them with any worries or concerns. Pupils live out this culture of kindness in the way that they help each other. One pupil, summing up the views of many, said, 'We are kind, we care and we learn'. Older pupils act as role models, supporting younger pupils. For example, they take on roles such as lunchtime monitors.

The school expects pupils to achieve well and make good progress through the curriculum. Pupils work hard in lessons, showing an interest in their learning. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils engage well with their learning and behaviour is good. Lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. If there are any problems, they trust the school to help sort them out.

The school places a strong focus on well-being and mental health and pupils know how to keep themselves healthy.

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

The school has established a broad and balanced curriculum. In most subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge and skills they want the pupils to learn by the time they leave in Year 2. The curriculum builds pupils' knowledge and skills in a logical and progressive way. In the early years, there is a purposeful learning environment with a strong focus on early language. This promotes children's development and prepares them for Year 1. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), access and keep up with the intended curriculum and remember what they have been taught. However, in some areas, such as spelling, sentence structure and handwriting, some pupils do not develop these skills as they should. As a result, the school sometimes assigns writing tasks that may be too challenging for them.

The school has made reading and phonics a key priority. Pupils enjoy reading and can talk about books they have read. Staff receive ongoing training, which ensures that they have strong subject knowledge and teach phonics well. The school's checks on pupils' learning help staff to identify gaps in phonic knowledge. Pupils then receive extra support. However, for a small number of pupils with the most progress to make, books are not well matched to the sounds they know. This is because the school does not always monitor this support in a timely manner. As a result, these pupils are not learning to read fluently or catching up quick enough.

Mathematical concepts are developed well for most pupils. There is a well sequenced, progressive and comprehensive mathematics curriculum in place that is ambitious for all learners. All pupil groups, including those with English as an additional language, SEND

and disadvantaged pupils are well supported in their learning and can access the curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well in mathematics.

The school has high expectations of behaviour combined with a nurturing approach. This begins in the early years, where children know the routines and share equipment well. Across the rest of school, pupils behave well in lessons and at lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy the rewards for good behaviour, such as the school house system.

The school places a high priority on personal development. This develops well through the school and assemblies. Pupils learn important information about online safety, healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. They have lots of opportunities to be active. Pupils understand that everyone is different and unique but that they have the same rights as each other. They are confident that everyone in their school is treated equally and is welcome. Pupils understand the importance of being able to vote and have their voices heard. Pupils learn about fundamental British values in an age-appropriate way. They are keen to take on roles of responsibility, such as joining the school council or becoming lunchtime monitors. Pupils also understand that some responsibilities, like keeping the school tidy, are shared by everyone. They say this helps them feel prepared for moving to junior school. Pupils have the opportunity to attend a range of clubs such as 'bookie monster' club, computing club, Spanish club and multi-skills club.

The school has a consistent vision, focused on kindness and care. The governors know their roles well and maintain clear and consistent oversight of the school. They provide challenge and support. There is a shared ambition to ensure equality of opportunity and outcomes for all.

The school know the families and community well, and parents and carers are supportive. They value the school's welcoming and caring approach. Being a small school, everyone takes on multiple responsibilities. The school prioritises staff well-being and ensures that workload is manageable. All staff, including those early in their career, feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- The school does not consistently provide enough support for weaker readers to catch up quickly. As a result, some pupils struggle to read with fluency. The school needs to ensure that the books given to pupils for reading practice are closely matched to the sounds they are already familiar with.

- Writing tasks do not consistently match pupils' spelling and grammar knowledge. As a result, some pupils struggle to develop writing fluency. The school should ensure that pupils have opportunities to write using the sounds they are familiar with.
- Monitoring of the curriculum and catch-up programmes does not happen in a timely and focused manner. This means that the school does not have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. The school should ensure that systems for monitoring are purposeful.

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	114134
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346295
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carolyn Mason
Headteacher	Lynne Frazer
Website	www.durhamnewtonhall.durham.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, school staff, representatives of the governing body and the local authority school improvement advisor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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. An inspector also spoke with some parents.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the online staff survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Nichola Irving, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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