

Inspection of New Brancepeth Primary Academy

Rock Terrace, New Brancepeth, Durham DH7 7EU

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Charlotte Robson. This school is part of Advance 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), Kelvin Simpson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alan Boddy. There is also an executive headteacher, Helen Louise Templeton, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small, nurturing school with big ambitions. There is a strong sense of belonging, shared by pupils and staff. Parents and carers are made to feel welcome in school. They appreciate regular opportunities to attend events such as phonics workshops and 'learning together' sessions.

The school is committed to broadening pupils' life experiences and to raising their aspirations. The curriculum is enriched by frequent visits and visitors into school. Each pupil has a 'pupil passport' to record their experiences. These include outdoor education residential experiences and visits to historical sites. Leaders build pupils' knowledge of their area alongside a deeper understanding of the wider world.

The school has recently improved its curriculum. It has benefited from the expert support of the trust. Pupils achieve well. However, this is not always reflected in published results due to very small year groups.

Pupils say they feel happy and safe in school. Staff create a calm and purposeful environment where pupils can learn without distraction. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their actions and learn from any mistakes that they may have made.

The school provides a varied offer of extra-curricular clubs, such as archery and craft. Pupils enjoy many special roles and responsibilities, for example, they can serve as librarians and house captains. This develops their leadership skills and self-confidence.

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

Leaders are taking highly effective action to continually improve the quality of education that pupils receive. The curriculum is well designed to build on pupils' prior learning. For example, children develop a secure understanding of number in the early years. This prepares them for more challenging problem-solving and reasoning tasks as they progress through school. Careful thought has been given so that pupils taught in mixed-aged classes learn the skills and knowledge in a sensible order. For example, when learning map skills, younger pupils use four points on a compass while their older classmates are introduced to eight points.

Leaders have prioritised the development of language. Books are evident throughout the early years. Children encounter new language through listening to stories. They apply this language when they tell their own stories. In key stages 1 and 2, subject curriculums identify the key vocabulary that pupils must learn. Teachers revisit this vocabulary often and make regular checks to ensure that pupils remember it. However, sometimes pupils find it more difficult to recall what they have learned and to make links in their learning. This is due to the legacy of the old curriculum and previous gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Pupils love to read. The school has developed an impressive new library that pupils visit regularly. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and novels that they have shared in class.

In the Nursery class, children learn songs and rhymes and to distinguish between different sounds. This prepares them well for the phonics programme that is introduced from the beginning of the Reception Year. The school has introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Staff are well trained to deliver the programme. Teachers regularly check how well pupils progress through the reading programme. Pupils at risk of falling behind receive the extra help that they need to catch up quickly. Reading books are closely matched to the sounds pupils are learning. Pupils can use their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. This is because their additional needs are identified quickly. Helpful support plans are written with class teachers and advice from external agencies. The use of additional adults and adaptations made to the curriculum help pupils to learn alongside their classmates.

Leaders know that for pupils to learn they must attend regularly. Attendance has been low since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as a result of the school's recent actions, pupils' rates of attendance have improved.

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders have developed a programme that is well suited to the school's context. The curriculum teaches pupils about world religions and different types of families. They learn about the importance of healthy relationships. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at New Brancepeth Primary.

Leadership within the school is exceptional. Effectively supported by the trust, leadership capacity has grown significantly since the previous inspection. There is a culture of 'grow your own' which reflects the school's commitment to professional development. Trustees keep a close eye on school improvement priorities and offer highly effective challenge and support.

Staff feel valued and listened to. They appreciate strategies that the school has introduced to reduce their workload and enhance well-being, such as access to a counsellor.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are less securely implemented than others. This means that some pupils are not able to recall and connect knowledge in these subjects. The school should take further action to embed the curriculum and check that pupils are remembering and connecting their knowledge over time.

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	148970
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346799
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	131
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Boddy
CEO of the trust	Kelvin Simpson
Headteacher	Helen Louise Templeton
Website	newbrancepethprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- New Brancepeth Primary Academy converted to become an academy in March 2022. When its predecessor school, New Brancepeth Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged as requires improvement for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the Advance Learning Partnership multi-academy trust.
- There is provision for two-year-olds.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school childcare for its 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 CEO, executive headteacher and head of school. Inspectors also held discussions with other leaders, trustees and governors, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in classes, breakfast club, playtime and when moving around school.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Victoria James

Ofsted Inspector

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