

Inspection of Eppleton Academy Primary School

Church Road, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH5 9AJ

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 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

The headteacher of this school is Laura Jackson. This school is a single academy trust called Eppleton Academy Primary School which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susan McNeilly.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff and with each other. The school is a friendly and supportive place. Pupils are well-cared for. Visitors are made to feel very welcome. The school is ambitious for what pupils can achieve and pupils rise to these high expectations. Pupils make a particularly strong start to their education in early reading and in mathematics. This continues through the school in mathematics, but is not as consistent in reading.

Pupils' aspirations for the future are raised through well-planned activities. For example, throughout the curriculum pupils learn about different careers and jobs. When visitors come to school, for whatever reason, they will explain to pupils what job they do.

Pupils behave well. They cooperate in lessons and concentrate on their work. They are interested and engaged with their learning. Pupils play well together. They make the most of the many games and activities available to them at lunchtime. Pupils of all ages enjoy playing games whilst wearing the vibrant costumes available in the dressing-up shed. These activities help pupils to stay active and develop their social skills.

There are plenty of activities on offer after school. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the boys, girls, and mixed football teams and the school choir. Pupils have many opportunities to undertake leadership roles in school, such as the well-being ambassadors. They are proud to help out and to be responsible.

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

The school has a rich and broad curriculum. This curriculum has strong foundations in the early years. Adults skilfully help pupils to develop their communication and language skills. Staff listen and respond to children, building their knowledge and vocabulary. The school identifies pupils who need extra help with reading. Well-planned support is put in place quickly to support these pupils in becoming confident and fluent readers.

The school is building upon this strong start in reading to ensure it is sustained to the end of key stage 2. Leaders have carefully considered what pupils need to do to improve their reading. They have implemented changes to the curriculum to bring this about. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading for pleasure. They can talk informatively about their favourite authors. Pupils are proud of how many books they have read.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive timely and effective support. The school promptly identifies any barriers to learning that pupils face. Teaching is adapted to support pupils so that they achieve well.

In the wider curriculum, pupils learn much of the curriculum well. In music, for example, they apply their knowledge of pitch and major and minor keys to strong effect. In history, pupils in Year 2 can clearly explain the history of mining in their local area. They know about child labour in the mines and technological innovations, such as the Davey lamp and the locomotive. However, on occasions the most important knowledge that pupils

need to learn is not identified as clearly as it could be in the wider curriculum. This can affect how well pupils build knowledge in some subjects.

Results in the end of key stage 2 tests in 2023 show that pupils did not achieve well enough in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The changes that the school has subsequently made to the teaching of the mathematics curriculum has improved pupils' problem solving and, as a result, current pupils are achieving well. The school has also diligently made changes to the reading curriculum. Pupils' fluency and comprehension in reading in key stage 2 is steadily improving.

Pupils behave well. In class, they are keen to answer questions and work hard. Outside of class, they manage their behaviour with very little adult intervention. They know how to follow the rules. They are polite and well-mannered. At this early stage in the school year, children in the early years are explicitly taught manners and routines. Pupils know why attendance at school is important and attend well.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities. There are plenty of sports on offer, along with choir, gardening, art and card games. Pupils take up these opportunities in large numbers. The personal development curriculum is a particular strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of equal opportunities. They appreciate and celebrate the differences among people in their community and beyond. They proudly say, 'in our school, there are no outsiders.' Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and safe, especially their mental health and well-being.

Governors have the right skills to challenge and support the school. Their work is effective. Governors understand the local community and parents are very well-represented on the governing body. Staff work co-operatively to develop the curriculum and the personal development programme for pupils. They are passionate about supporting the pupils and working at this school. Staff state very clearly that leaders manage their workload effectively and support their 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)

- Pupils do not currently achieve as well as they need to in reading by the end of key stage 2. This means that some pupils lack the knowledge to become confident and fluent readers. The school should continue to build on the strengths in the early

reading programme and ensure consistency in the teaching of reading in key stages 1 and 2, so that pupils develop greater fluency.

- In some subjects, the school has not identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to know. This affects how well pupils build their knowledge in these subjects. The school should continue to refine the curriculum, so that the most essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn are made clear and checked regularly.

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	138213
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10346440
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan McNeilly
Headteacher	Laura Jackson
Website	www.eppletonacademyprimary.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative education provision.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school club.

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, other senior leaders and governors. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector studied a variety of documents. These included the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance information and safeguarding records.
- The views of parents and carers, staff and pupils were gathered through Ofsted's surveys and face-to-face discussions.
- The views of pupils were considered by meeting with them to talk about their learning and by speaking to them in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their 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.

Inspection team

Carl Sugden, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lynn George

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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