

Inspection of Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School Academy

Cleves Cross, Ferryhill, County Durham DL17 8QY

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good

Ofsted has not previously inspected Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Cleves Cross Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

The headteacher of this school is Christine Brentnall. The school is part of the Together 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), Alison Lazenby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Muir.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School, pupils thrive because the school has high aspirations. There is an exceptional personal development offer for all. Staff teach pupils the importance of equality, diversity and being ambitious for their futures. Pupils benefit from a wide, rich set of experiences. They take part in exchanges with a school abroad, debating competitions, community events and caring for the school environment. Because of the school's excellent work to develop pupils' character, they are well prepared to be positive citizens of the future.

Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well when moving around the school building because they understand the rights of others to learn uninterrupted. Class charters ensure that pupils understand their rights and responsibilities well. Staff and pupils share warm, positive relationships. Pupils say they feel safe and well supported by staff. Inspectors agree. Pupils engage in clubs and activities regularly. Pupils understand the importance of physical activity and mental health.

The school has high expectations for how pupils should conduct themselves and speak to one another and staff. Staff focus on developing pupils' vocabulary so they can communicate with confidence. The majority of pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons. Many pupils achieve well at the school. This is particularly the case in reading and mathematics.

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

A high-quality curriculum is in place in the majority of subjects. What pupils will learn, and in what order, is clearly set out. The activities that pupils undertake in lessons generally help them to gain a better understanding of each topic. However, in some subjects in the wider curriculum, the explanations and activities that staff provide do not help pupils learn the curriculum as well as they might. Pupils sometimes need additional opportunities to practise the skills and knowledge they have been taught before moving on to new learning.

The school has prioritised regular reading and vocabulary sessions. Staff skilfully teach the phonics programme so that children learn to read successfully from an early age. Pupils who need extra support with their reading quickly catch up with their peers. Staff emphasise important vocabulary and check that pupils have understood it. Pupils communicate well and use complex vocabulary with increasing confidence. Staff encourage a love of reading from the early years foundation stage (EYFS), with daily story time, rhymes and songs.

Staff regularly check for gaps in pupils' understanding. For example, in mathematics, 'Flashback 4' tasks help pupils to revisit and remember their previous learning. However, this is not as effective across all subjects, which means that sometimes staff do not always know the specific gaps that pupils have in their knowledge and skills. As a result, these are not always addressed quickly enough and pupils sometimes struggle to remember what they have been taught over time.

The EYFS curriculum prepares children well for their next stage of education. Learning activities have been carefully selected. Children gain important knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Adults interact with children well to develop their speech and language skills. The learning environment inside the EYFS area is well organised and stimulating. Children are resilient and focus well on the activities set out for them. However, the outdoor learning area is less well developed. Children do not benefit as fully from this aspect of the curriculum. Recent additions to the provision have begun to further enrich children's experience of their early education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported by staff who know them well. Information about pupils' specific needs is detailed and used by staff to adapt learning in the majority of lessons. Sometimes, further adaptations for pupils with SEND would benefit them in the classroom. The school is committed to fully including pupils with SEND in every aspect of school life, including enrichment visits and sports. Pupils are kind and welcoming to those who are different from themselves.

Pupils' attendance is a high priority for everyone at the school. Rewards and incentives highlight the importance of being at school every day. The school has had significant success in reducing levels of persistent absence and supporting individual families. There is more to do to improve the attendance of some groups of pupils to meet the school's ambitious targets.

Those responsible for governance undertake their roles with diligence and skill. They understand the many strengths of the school but also its next steps. Governors ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to support school improvement. The well-being of staff is paramount. Staff say they feel well supported and value the many training opportunities on offer. This training ensures that the school can continue to grow and develop.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Implementation of the curriculum is variable across the school. In some lessons, staff do not break down learning into manageable chunks or give pupils sufficient opportunity to practise what they have been taught. This means that pupils do not develop a deep understanding of the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that staff understand how to implement the curriculum effectively, through ongoing training, and monitor the impact of their work on pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- In some subjects, particularly the foundation ones, the school does not have an effective assessment system that allows staff to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, staff cannot consistently check what pupils do, and do not,

remember. Opportunities to address gaps in knowledge are sometimes missed. The school should ensure its approach to assessment allows staff to identify knowledge and skills gaps before moving on to new learning.

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	140324
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10315575
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	239
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Muir
CEO of the trust	Alison Lazenby
Headteacher	Christine Brentnall
Website	www.clevescrossprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Together Learning Partnership in November 2013.
- Several senior leaders are new to post since the previous inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education provision.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals who attend the school is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who attend the school is above average.

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 and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with the CEO of the trust. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body and trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team also met with leaders responsible for pupils with SEND and the early years provision at the school.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. The inspectors also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying. The inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the school's programme of personal development.
- The inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This includes the comments submitted via the free-text facility. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys, as well as speaking to parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Vickers

Ofsted Inspector

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