

Inspection of Bellingham Primary School

Redesmouth Road, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 2EL

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this rural village school. The school's values of kindness, respect, courage and excellence sit at the heart of the school's work. Staff have created a nurturing environment for pupils. They know their pupils and families well. Relationships are warm and caring. Pupils trust staff to look after them. They feel safe and happy, and enjoy coming to school.

Pupils strive to live up to the school's high expectations of their achievement and behaviour. Pupils show enthusiasm in lessons. They behave consistently well in both lessons and during social times. Children in Reception learn in a calm, settled environment. They make a positive start to their education.

The school serves a small, rural community. As such, it is determined to prepare pupils well for life beyond the school. The school provides opportunities for pupils to visit cities and places of cultural interest beyond their locality, such as Newcastle and an open-air living museum. Pupils have opportunities to develop their talents and interests through the range of clubs on offer, including construction, cheerleading and French. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their educational journey.

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

The school has worked hard over the past 12 months, reviewing and designing an ambitious curriculum to meet the needs of its pupils. It has considered and carefully sequenced the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Pupils have opportunities to revisit and build on their prior learning. Where there are gaps or misconceptions, teachers intervene to address these quickly. However, in some foundation subjects, more time is needed to further embed the content of the revised curriculum. Presently, the school does not have a clear understanding of the difference that the revised curriculum is making to pupils' learning.

Staff are knowledgeable about their pupils' needs and ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. There are robust systems in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified swiftly. Through staff support and adaptations to the curriculum, pupils with SEND successfully progress through the curriculum.

The school has created a culture where reading is a priority, and celebrated. In Reception, children are introduced to nursery rhymes, songs and stories. Pupils learn letter sounds and words in a structured and well-ordered way. As pupils develop their phonics knowledge, they are provided with books that match the sounds they know. Pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills to become confident, fluent readers. Those who struggle with learning to read are identified and extra support is put in place to enable them to catch up quickly.

Children benefit from a well-designed curriculum in Reception. The ambitious learning environment includes an art studio so that children can develop and showcase their

creativity. Staff plan carefully the learning underpinning the chosen activities. Staff are experts at extending children's language through varied learning opportunities that promote discussion. For example, when learning outside, children discuss the merits of different natural materials for building houses for the three little pigs.

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is much improved. There is a range of opportunities and experiences on offer for pupils to develop their confidence, character and resilience. These include taking part in sporting tournaments and holding leadership responsibilities. Through assemblies and the school's personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn about relationships, tolerance and understanding. Pupils speak with confidence about equality and diversity. Pupils discuss their learning from educational visits, including to the theatre and the museum. The school makes good use of its extensive grounds to enhance the curriculum, for example through den building and learning within the natural environment.

The school has experienced some instability and changes to leadership in recent years. However, governors and staff have continued to prioritise the needs of pupils. There is now a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Governors share this vision. They hold leaders to account for the school's performance through considered support and challenge. The consideration given to staff's well-being and workload is appreciated. Staff are proud to work at the school. The determination for all pupils to be successful is a priority shared by staff and leaders at all levels.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum subjects, changes to the curriculum are recent and need time to embed. In these subjects, pupils do not yet develop the same depth of knowledge as they do in others. The school should ensure that staff are able to deliver the revised curriculum effectively.
- Oversight of how well the newly developed curriculum is being implemented is at an early stage of development. This means that the school does not have a fully accurate understanding of how well pupils are learning the revised curriculum. The school should ensure that it understands how well pupils are learning in each subject and make improvements to teaching where needed.

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	122183
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10323004
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anthony Kirkbride
Headteacher	Steve Gibson
Website	www.bellinghamprimary.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Bellingham Federation, alongside Bellingham Middle School. The schools in the federation share the same governing body and are on the same site.
- There are currently no pupils on roll in Year 5 or Year 6.
- The school uses one alternative provision.

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 point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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, 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.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents and carers informally in person and through responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The views of staff were considered through the Ofsted staff survey and meetings with them. Pupils’ views were considered through a pupil survey and discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the governing body and the local authority.

Inspection team

Lynn Chambers, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Mitchinson

Ofsted Inspector

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