

# Inspection of a good school: Whinfield Primary School

Augusta Close, Whinfield Primary School, Darlington, County Durham DL1 3HT

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Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

## Outcome

Whinfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend Whinfield Primary School with a smile. They feel valued and well cared for. The school motto states: 'Whinfield is kindness, resilience, concentration and problem solving'. The motto is lived out on a daily basis by the pupils who want to do their best for their teachers. Parents and carers appreciate the warm welcome that they and their children receive each morning from the school staff. One parent said: 'There are amazing teachers at this school who make learning fun every day.'

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations. They are motivated and keen to do well.

Teachers make sure that pupils experience a wide range of subjects. In most of these subjects, pupils develop a solid grasp of basic concepts. However, there are a small number of inconsistencies that leaders are addressing, for example in looking carefully at the subject and making sure that pupils are using key words to explain their thinking.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that teachers take swift action should any bullying or name-calling occur. Pupils explained to the inspector that staff listen to their worries and help them when needed. They particularly like 'Mindful Mondays' where they can talk about their well-being.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils love the new behaviour and rewards system, 'Gems', and like the fact that they gain team points for positive attitudes and hard work. Pupils who consistently show these qualities receive tokens for their team, stickers and rewards certificates weekly.

Pupils respect their peers. They are kind to each other and work collaboratively. These attributes are developed from the early years, giving children strong foundations to be successful learners and citizens.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and balanced curriculum that begins in the early years. They have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. As a result, all pupils are engaged in lessons, proud of their learning and eager to try their best.

Curriculum leaders have made clear the important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. In most subjects, teachers use this information to help them design learning that builds on what pupils already know. Pupils talk with confidence about their learning. This is especially clear in mathematics. Teachers ask questions to check pupils' understanding skilfully. Teachers plan work that helps pupils to practise and master new concepts, such as equivalent fractions. Pupils develop strong mathematical knowledge.

Leaders make reading a priority. There is a structured approach to the teaching of reading that starts in the early years. This sets out exactly what pupils should know at different points in their learning. Teachers are very well trained. They make sure that pupils practise reading every day. Most pupils learn to read well. Staff identify pupils who are struggling and make sure they are given extra support in lessons. As a result, pupils are confident as they have mastered the basics and can move on swiftly.

Teachers like to read and share stories with pupils every day. Pupils enjoy this. Older pupils enjoy reading independently and have a good choice of texts from class and school libraries. They talk enthusiastically about books.

The leader for SEND has made sure that staff are well trained and have appropriate resources to support learning of SEND pupils. She works closely with a range of agencies to provide specialist support for this group when required. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. These actions are helping pupils with SEND achieve well. Teachers carefully design work that allows pupils to flourish.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have only recently clarified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Consequently, teachers are at an earlier stage of being able to use this information to build on pupils' prior learning. In these subjects, pupils do not display the same depth of knowledge.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school, including in the early years. They enjoy their lessons and are keen to talk about their learning. Pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking in full sentences from an early age. Leaders have made sure that there is a range of opportunities to nurture pupils' personal development, including residential opportunities, activities and visits. Pupils value the care and support from all staff.

Governors are knowledgeable about leaders' priorities. They support and challenge leaders in their work to make further improvements. Leaders and governors are considerate of staff workload and well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know how to keep pupils safe. They understand how to report any concerns, which are swiftly followed up by leaders. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Leaders use a range of visitors to help pupils understand the risks to their safety that they may face. For instance, the police have recently spoken to pupils about social media and the dangers of sharing private information.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have only recently concluded their plans and curriculum design that highlights the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. This means that teachers are at an early stage of planning activities that build on pupils' prior knowledge. Leaders should ensure that learning builds on earlier content and that recently introduced plans are fully embedded. This will help pupils deepen their understanding of these subjects and know and remember more of the intended curriculum.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 10 January 2017.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134719
<b>Local authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211112
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	518
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Claire Thorns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shirley Welsh
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whinfield.net">www.whinfield.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair and vice chair of governors have been appointed.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers and three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors. She also spoke with the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing curriculum plans, talking to pupils and teachers and reviewing pupils' work.
- The inspector held discussions with the special educational needs co-ordinator and safeguarding leader. She also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, lunchtimes and during lessons. Pupils also talked to the inspector about their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the 62 responses to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day. She also considered the 128 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector reviewed the range of safeguarding documentation. This included the record of checks on staff suitability to work with pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Jen Cave, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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