

Inspection of a good school: Wolsingham Primary School

Upper Town, Wolsingham, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 3ET

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

Wolsingham Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They especially value the strong relationships they make with their classmates. They describe them as 'friends for life'. Parents and carers talk very positively about their children's experience at school. Parents feel that they were well supported when the school was closed to most pupils due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Pupils continued to learn remotely: for example, daily phonics lessons were posted so that they did not fall behind. Parents appreciate the weekly newsletter and knowing which topics their children are learning. However, some parents would like more information about how they can help their children, for example with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils behave well. In the lessons the inspector visited, pupils listened attentively to their teachers and classmates. Hands shot up as they were eager to answer questions or suggest a different idea. Pupils get on without fuss or distraction because they want to learn. Pupils enjoy a number of special roles and responsibilities, such as the 'helping hands, caring heart' group, sports crew and safety squad. The eco-warriors have funded 12 toilets in underdeveloped countries.

Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that any incidents are dealt with by staff. A parent shared an example that was quickly 'nipped in the bud'.

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

School leaders understand the needs of their pupils and the community they serve. They have carefully selected the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. They want their pupils to be resilient and socially aware. Learning is sequenced to help pupils build on what they already know. For example, in history, pupils in Year 1 can order personal photographs from youngest to oldest. By Year 6, they have a good understanding of chronology and can place world events accurately on a timeline. In subjects that are not as coherently planned and sequenced as they could be, leaders are making necessary changes. Pupils sometimes struggle to remember what they have learned in the past.

School leaders are addressing this. For example, in mathematics, a regular 'Top 10' activity challenges pupils to remember and apply previous learning. This is now being developed in other subjects.

School leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading in school. When children are ready, they become familiar with letters in Nursery. This prepares them well for Reception, where phonics gets off to a flying start. School leaders check on the progress that children are making. When pupils are at risk of falling behind, extra help is offered so they 'keep up, not catch up'. The school has recently purchased new reading books to support the phonics programme. However, some pupils still struggle to read with fluency because their reading book is too difficult. Pupils in key stage 2 are enthusiastic about reading. They can name a favourite author and talk about books they like to read. Pupils read daily and enjoy answering online quizzes to test their understanding. Story time is a regular feature of the school day.

Pupils do well in mathematics. Children are well prepared in early years, where numbers are explored in depth to consolidate understanding. For example, children in Reception can talk about the different ways they can make 4. Mathematical vocabulary is introduced early on, so some children can identify doubling 2 as one possibility. As pupils progress through the school, their understanding of number and place value is developed well. Staff training on developing problem-solving and reasoning skills is making a difference. Pupils can explain their thinking and justify their answers.

Pupils with SEND are quickly identified. This ensures that they receive the support that they need. Governors keep a sharp eye on the progress these pupils make and are not afraid to challenge leaders. Teachers are skilled at adapting their teaching to ensure that all pupils can learn together. Advice and support are welcomed from other organisations, for example Durham County Council's emotional well-being and effective learning (EWEL) team.

Restrictions brought about by COVID-19 have affected the wider curriculum opportunities that the school can currently offer. Working in partnership with the local community has been a strength of the school, for example through the Weardale Tub Project and Durham Lumiere Festival. Pupils are looking forward to the full return of after-school clubs, such as the football, forest school and chess clubs.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. School leaders have taken action since the previous inspection to develop fundamental British values in school. Pupils talk respectfully about different faiths and cultures. As part of the school's 'educate and celebrate' programme, pupils are working towards the Pride and Inclusion Award.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff receive regular training and know that 'it could happen here'. There are clear systems in place for reporting concerns. Detailed record keeping shows appropriate referrals and action taken. The school works in partnership with other agencies to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

The curriculum supports pupils to be safe. Working in partnership with the police, pupils have an up-to-date understanding of online safety. School leaders send parents helpful updates to support this work.

Appropriate recruitment checks ensure that all adults are suitable to work in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils struggle to read fluently and with accuracy because not all reading books are matched to the sounds they have learned. Leaders should make sure that reading books connect closely with pupils' phonic knowledge.
- In some foundation subjects, the sequencing of knowledge content and skills is not yet fully developed. Therefore, pupils' learning in these subjects does not build sufficiently on prior knowledge. Leaders must ensure that knowledge and skills are carefully sequenced in all subjects.
- Some parents believe that communication with the school could be better. Leaders should consult with parents to ensure that they receive the information that they need to support their children.

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 some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, 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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

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

Unique reference number	114068
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10199994
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Eastwood
Headteacher	Sarah Kitching
Website	www.wolsingham-pri.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides wraparound childcare. A breakfast club operates from 8am daily and an after-school club provides childcare until 5.30pm.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders for English, mathematics, history, the early years foundation stage and SEND. The inspector met with the local authority adviser and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. Discussions were also held with a number of teachers and support staff.
- The quality of education was inspected by visiting lessons, meeting with a range of pupils and staff, looking at pupils' work and examining curriculum documentation. The inspector looked closely at reading, mathematics and history.

- The inspector considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and via the 59 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View survey that were received.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult, observed their behaviour moving around school and at breaktime, met with pupils formally to gather their opinions, and held informal discussions across both days of the inspection.
- A wide range of safeguarding information and documentation was scrutinised, including referrals and attendance records.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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