

Inspection of a good school: Hylton Castle Primary School

Caithness Road, Hylton Castle, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR5 3RE

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Outcome

Hylton Castle Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this inclusive and nurturing school. They are eager to learn. Pupils work hard in lessons in response to their teachers' high expectations.

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. Staff support pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful and responsible members of the community. Older pupils enjoy helping and taking on responsibilities such as being playground buddies.

Relationships between adults and children are warm, respectful and trusting. The pupils who spoke to the inspector said they feel safe because staff care for them. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life.

Pupils behave well during lessons and throughout the school day. Pupils play cooperatively at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They enjoy accessing the large grounds and the wide range of equipment available to them. Playtimes are happy occasions.

Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare in their school. They are confident that adults will help them if they have any problems. Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone with respect, regardless of any differences. Pupils maturely and confidently discuss important issues, such as equality and diversity.

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

Leaders make sure the teaching of reading is prioritised across the school. As soon as children start in the early years, adults immerse them in stories, rhymes and poems that develop their language skills. Older pupils value their regular story times with adults. Pupils appreciate the wide selection of books available to them in the school's library. They talk knowledgeably about different books and their favourite authors. Pupils demonstrate a love of reading.

Leaders have recently introduced a new program for teaching phonics. They have resourced this program well. Staff accurately match books to pupils' phonics knowledge. Leaders have provided training to all staff. However, additional training is needed to make sure staff can successfully deliver this program with confidence and expertise.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. They use the knowledge learned in previous years to help them to tackle new learning. Pupils use a range of calculation methods competently. They can recall mathematical facts quickly and apply these to their calculations. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. Teachers use a range of resources to illustrate mathematical concepts clearly. This helps pupils to grasp new learning securely.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the requirements of the national curriculum and relates to the school's locality. The curriculum is well sequenced. It sets out the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn in each subject. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, some teachers do not choose learning activities that focus on the most important subject knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils struggle to remember their learning over time. They do not benefit from leaders' ambitious curriculum plans in these subjects.

The early years curriculum is well sequenced and ambitious. Teachers provide well designed activities that link to the children's developing needs and interests. Early years staff use every opportunity to model spoken language. Staff regularly check on what children know to make sure children's individual needs are well met.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is highly effective. Leaders identify pupils' additional needs quickly. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides highly effective support for staff to help them meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. Leaders and staff work well with a range of professionals to help all pupils to achieve well.

The school has a successful personal development programme. Teachers promote and celebrate equality and diversity throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about a wide range of issues, including healthy relationships and online safety. Pupils have a thorough understanding of rights and responsibilities. They display very good manners and are polite.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders had established an ambitious programme of extra-curricular activities. Leaders have reinstated these quickly. Pupils once again enjoy exciting trips and events that enrich the curriculum. Pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from the range of extra-curricular clubs that the school offers. Many take part in a wide range of musical activities and sporting clubs.

A strong culture of learning, praise and encouragement runs throughout the school. Pupils take delight in celebrating their achievements through the many rewards which are on offer. Pupils are keen to become the 'heroes of the week.'

The headteacher and the leadership team have fostered a strong team ethos. They prioritise staff well-being and workload. Most staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' response to tackling issues with workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders see pupils' safety as one of the most important aspects of their work. All staff undertake regular safeguarding training. They are alert to any signs that pupils may be at risk from harm. All staff ensure that they record and report any safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. Leaders follow up on these concerns appropriately and ensure that pupils and their families get help when they need it.

Leaders have carefully considered the local risks to pupils, such as road safety, and have included these in the curriculum design. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects such as geography, teachers do not always provide learning activities that match the intended learning outcomes. Pupils do not learn and recall the most important subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the subject training and support necessary to implement curriculum plans effectively.
- Some staff do not have the subject expertise necessary to deliver the phonics curriculum consistently well. Some pupils do not gain the phonics knowledge they need to learn to read with fluency. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training they need to deliver the phonics curriculum effectively and consistently across all classes.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged Hylton Castle Primary school to be good in February 2012.

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	108832
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10211272
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	233
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Caroline Comer
Headteacher	Lisa Wood
Website	www.hyltoncastleprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change in leadership since the last inspection, with the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- There is an on-site breakfast club managed by the school.
- The school is not using any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. A meeting was also held with three governors, including the chair of governors. The inspector had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Deep dives were undertaken in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a

sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector looked at a selection of books from across the wider curriculum and a sample of books from pupils with SEND.
- The school's self-evaluation and leaders' plans for improvement were reviewed.
- The inspector met with the SENCo and checked the quality of support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and around school, including during lunchtime. The inspector met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school.
- The inspector looked at the school's record of recruitment checks made on adults who work in the school. The inspector discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, including 18 free-text responses. In addition, the inspector considered 21 responses to the pupil survey and 23 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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