

Inspection of Blackhall Primary School

Middle Street, Blackhall Colliery, Hartlepool TS27 4NA

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff are ambitious for all pupils at Blackhall Primary School. The headteacher has worked successfully to strengthen the school. Leaders have created a welcoming and inclusive environment. There is a clear sense of belonging and relationships between adults and pupils are strong.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils' successes are celebrated. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy learning with friends. Pupils are happy at school.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful, polite and considerate. Pupils of all ages take turns, listen to each other and confidently share their ideas. Pupils feel safe in school. They understand that there can be several types of bullying. Pupils know that if bullying happens, adults will deal with it quickly.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that this school is at the heart of the community. Pupils raise funds for local and national charities. Pupils value the many roles and responsibilities that they have in school.

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. A comment from one parent, typical of many others, was that 'This school is absolutely fantastic. Staff value all children and nurture the whole child.'

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a significant period of disruption. Many leaders are new to their roles. Senior leaders are supporting new subject leaders to develop their knowledge and skills, so that they can further develop the curriculum.

Leaders are determined for all pupils to achieve well. They know that some pupils have previously not achieved as highly as they could. Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum, full of rich experiences. This curriculum is ambitious and meets the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the important knowledge, concepts and vocabulary that children will learn from the early years to Year 6. They have ensured that new learning builds on what pupils already know.

Assessment is used effectively. Teachers accurately identify pupils who might need extra help. This includes pupils with SEND. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of pupils. Teachers use support plans well to help pupils make good progress.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Leaders have introduced a new programme to teach phonics. Staff have received the training that they need to teach it effectively. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. Pupils who need extra

support get the help that they need to become confident and fluent readers. As a result, pupils learn to read well.

Leaders have carefully planned the books that pupils will read during their time at school. Pupils become familiar with books that develop their understanding of diversity and differences. There is a love of reading throughout the school. Staff read to pupils daily. Pupils cherish these reading sessions and listen attentively throughout. Pupils talk with passion about their favourite authors and stories.

The mathematics curriculum is designed to identify the small steps of learning that pupils need to master. Lessons include daily opportunities for pupils to recap and develop their mathematical knowledge. This helps pupils to build their knowledge over time. In the early years, children use real objects to develop their understanding of counting.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Leaders have worked successfully to improve the curriculum and the environment. The ambitious curriculum meets children's needs. Children settle into school quickly and enjoy their learning. They form trusting relationships with staff. Children are well prepared for life in Year 1.

Pupils are well behaved. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to join in with the learning. Playtimes are happy occasions. Pupils play well together. They show high levels of respect for one another.

Leaders successfully promote pupils' personal development. The curriculum is organised to ensure that pupils develop both the knowledge and skills they need to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about themselves and others. Pupils know how to stay safe, looking after and caring for one another.

Leaders have a strong focus on improving attendance and punctuality. However, they know there is still more work to be done as too many pupils arrive to school late or have poor attendance. Some pupils miss vital learning and are at risk of falling behind.

Governors are knowledgeable. They visit the school regularly. Governors challenge and hold leaders to account effectively. Staff feel well supported by leaders. Staff value the fact that, during a time where much has changed, leaders have successfully supported staff well-being and kept an oversight on their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant. All staff and governors are appropriately trained in how to report and record concerns about both pupils and staff. They are alert to signs that may indicate that a pupil is vulnerable or at risk of harm. Leaders follow up on concerns swiftly. They seek external support

when needed. Leaders challenge decisions if they believe they are not in the best interests of keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding records are accurately maintained.

Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils arrive late to school each day or have poor attendance. They miss out on essential learning and are at risk of falling behind. Leaders should continue to work with parents and their children to develop positive attitudes to school attendance, so that their attendance and punctuality improves.
- Many leaders are new to their role and there are some inconsistencies in subject leadership. This means some subjects are developing more rapidly than others. Leaders should further develop the expertise of new leaders so they can support improvements in their subjects.

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](#)' 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	114201
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10242154
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Fox
Headteacher	Rachel Leonard
Website	www.blackhallcolliery.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since November 2021.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in March 2022.
- A large number of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with

subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in geography and history.
- The inspector studied a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation, the school development plan, risk assessments, attendance data and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour throughout the school day, including during lesson visits and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their views on behaviour and the wider experiences they receive at school.
- The inspector met with the leader responsible for early years and looked at a range of documentation and planning.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through both discussions and considering their responses to Ofsted’s online surveys.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Ashworth	Ofsted Inspector
Zoe Westley	Ofsted Inspector

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