

Cockton Hill Infant School

McIntyre Terrace, Cockton Hill, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6HW

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and staff have worked as an energetic and cohesive team to drive improvement in all aspects of the school's work and in their own effectiveness, to good effect.
- The quality of teaching is now good. This has led to sustained improvement in pupils' attainment since the last inspection. Pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 2 are above average and improving.
- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Previous gaps between the achievements of boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils and other pupils have narrowed well.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are outstanding. They are excellent ambassadors for the values the school holds.
- Pupils' conduct and behaviour are impressive. Pupils are friendly, kind, respectful and thoughtful to each other and adults. Their attitudes to learning are consistently positive.
- The school is an oasis of calm and care and pupils thrive here. They are taught well about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are confident that any adult or buddy will help them when they are feeling down or have a problem.
- The school's approaches to improve pupils' previously low attendance are working. Attendance is now above average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is low.
- The early years has been transformed. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in Reception. They have made excellent progress this year.
- Governance has improved. Governors are trained well and ensure that leaders are held to account for the impact of their work effectively.
- Pupils' achievements, together with the personal, social, emotional and moral qualities they develop at Cockton Hill, prepare them well for their next steps in education and lives in the wider community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are not yet outstanding. At times, some teachers do not pick up basic errors in pupils' work, such as common words, or basic skills previously taught.
- On occasions some pupils, particularly the most able, are not challenged by their activities to achieve their very best. There are limited opportunities for them to think deeply or grapple with, and solve, problems for themselves.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are consistently stretched to make the best possible progress in lessons
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in activities that enable them to think deeply, and grapple with, and solve, problems for themselves
 - ensuring that teachers check basic errors in pupils' writing so they do not repeat the same simple errors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher's highly visible and inclusive leadership has invigorated staff and governors to take rapid action to tackle the areas requiring improvement at the last inspection and to drive the school forward.
- Leaders have been successful in their endeavours without losing sight of their core values of care, respect and inclusion for all. Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics: their behaviour is impressive. Leadership and management at all levels are good and staff morale is high.
- Senior and middle leaders have improved the way they check the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. This has eradicated weaker teaching and ensured that teaching is good. They know that teaching needs to be outstanding so that all pupils can achieve their very best.
- Leaders' rigorous monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and teachers' use of assessment to plan learning provide timely information on how well pupils are achieving in lessons. They identify any pupil at risk of falling behind quickly and teachers then provide targeted activities to help them catch up.
- Leaders have tightened the arrangements for managing the performance of staff. Staff speak with insight about the way they all contribute to the school's improvement and how they are held to account more robustly for the impact of their work, and their pupils' achievements. Teachers value highly the wide range of carefully planned training they receive to improve their effectiveness.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what is working well in the school and what should be better. They have set out clear priorities and targets for improvement in their action plan. They check actions regularly for impact.
- Leaders take decisive action when things are not as good as they should be. For example, the headteacher took direct action in September to hasten improvement in the early years. Actions have made their mark. Children in Reception are making outstanding progress in their learning and development and are very well prepared for Year 1. This is particularly the case in their literacy and numeracy skills, behaviour and personal qualities.
- Staff make the broad curriculum creative and enticing so that pupils are keen to take an active part in their lessons. This has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and contributed to the narrowing of previous gaps between boys' and girls' achievements and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils effectively. These groups achieve well compared with similar groups nationally. The government's additional funding, the pupil premium, has also contributed to the good improvements in the achievements and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Carefully targeted teaching and additional individual support help pupils with special educational needs or disability to make similarly good progress as their peers. The impact of such work can also be seen in the reduction of numbers of pupils requiring additional school support because their needs have been met.
- The culture of care and inclusion contributes powerfully to pupils' strong personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This awareness is enhanced by the personal, social, health and economic curriculum, assemblies and circle time. Qualities such as trust, respect and valuing people other than themselves contribute to pupils' good understanding of life as citizens beyond school and the values inherent in Britain today.
- Extra-curricular activities enrich the formal curriculum successfully. These include multi-skills, gymnastics, art, computer, street dance and sports training clubs, and the many visits out of school and visitors to school. They also help pupils to enjoy school, develop socially and emotionally, keep active and attend regularly.
- The additional sports funding has been used well. A sports apprentice has been employed to develop the skills of staff and pupils and to broaden the range of activities available. Pupils enjoy a range of different sports and speak proudly of their 'daily mile' at the end of each lunchtime that invigorates them for the afternoon ahead and keeps them fit.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Leaders go to great lengths to protect pupils and to keep them safe. They secure timely, multi-agency support for pupils and their families in times of great need. Parents are highly positive about the school's work. One summed up the views of many when reporting, 'Staff go above and beyond their job description. The school has a genuine happy atmosphere. I know my children are safe and well cared for while they are learning'.

- Local authority officers provided timely intervention and guidance following the inspection. Their work has supported the increasing leadership skills of the headteacher and the identification of key priorities for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is good. After the last inspection, governors, well supported by a national leader of governance, completed the review of their effectiveness quickly. They have undergone significant training and development. Governors have ensured that all statutory duties are met and now have the skills to support and challenge leaders effectively. Minutes of governing body meetings show the increasing challenge they bring to bear and the wide range of pupil performance information they regularly receive to help them evaluate the impact of the school's work. Governors have ensured that the arrangements for managing the performance of staff are effective. They also make sure the pupil premium is well spent and is having the desired impact in narrowing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors are highly vigilant and well trained to ensure pupils are safe in school and in the local community. This includes training on risks from radicalisation or child sexual exploitation. Staff take immediate action when risks are identified. Safeguarding and safer recruitment policies are up to date and used effectively. Risk assessments are robust and used appropriately. Thorough case files and record keeping for children at risk show the headteacher's active work to secure the safety of pupils in close cooperation with parents and agencies such as health, social care and the police. The headteacher has developed the role of a teaching assistant to support families and pupils in times of great need. Families value this work highly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Improvements begun quickly after the previous inspection have been developed further and have made a positive difference to the quality and consistency of teaching and, consequently, to the progress pupils make over time. Pupils achieve well in their reading, writing and mathematics work.
- Staff have been trained well in developing the new national curriculum for English and mathematics. They are also providing more challenge for the most-able pupils to 'master' and apply key skills. However, teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to stretch pupils fully or enable them to grapple with problems and work out their own solutions.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good. The enticing resources used in lessons such as a 'spaceship' on the yard, or props such as cloaks, keep pupils interested and active in their learning. It was charming to watch a young pupil chuckle out loud with delight at the sentence he had made to describe his witch.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and track their progress over time. They work with other staff in school, with local authority staff and staff in other schools to check that their assessments are accurate. This information is then used to plan lessons that move pupils on from their starting points effectively.
- Reading is taught well across the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to read and to practise their phonics skills (sounds that letters represent). Pupils enjoy reading out loud in lessons and to the many adults who hear them read each day. Pupils use their understanding of phonics effectively to work out unfamiliar words. The involvement of parents, through the home reading programme, is adding to the skills and confidence of pupils.
- Leaders have identified that untidy handwriting and some mistakes in skills already taught, such as the use of full stops and capital letters, are at times not always checked or challenged by some teachers. Such inconsistencies and variations in the challenge to the most-able pupils are barriers to pupils making the best possible progress in their learning. Leaders are already aware of these weaknesses and actions are in place to tackle them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Values of trust, mutual respect and care lie at the heart of the school's work and permeate everything the school does. Staff act as excellent role models and pupils respond with gusto to the high expectations and moral values of the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and they develop into thoughtful, caring and self-confident young people during their time at Cockton Hill.
- Pupils are adamant that they are very safe in school; a view endorsed by parents and staff in the inspection questionnaires. Pupils are taught extremely well about how to keep safe in school, online and in their community. Regular visitors to school such as the police and the NSPCC supplement the wide range of work in the curriculum to promote pupils' understanding of dangers and risks and how to respond to them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is in all of its forms. They learn about the diversity of families and valuing differences in lessons, circle time and assemblies. Pupils know that name-calling is sometimes an issue, but this is stamped out quickly once an adult or a school buddy is informed. The school's motto of, 'caring, happy, inspirational, successful,' is used well to promote pupils' positive relationships with each other and with staff.
- Citizenship awards, the school's eco-work, and the democratically elected school council contribute to pupils' good understanding of democracy, the rule of law, rights and responsibilities and the values at the heart of British society. Recent work, including emotive displays about the Battle of the Somme and about global citizenship have raised pupils' awareness of the moral and ethical issues within multi-cultural societies, and during wartime.
- A wide range of activities promote pupils' physical and emotional health successfully. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities such as roles as buddies. The well-attended breakfast club that gives pupils a healthy and sociable start to the day and the valued Sustrans award for the many pupils who travel to school by bicycle are just a couple of these successful activities.
- The school's work to support pupils and families in times of great need is exemplary. The headteacher takes robust action, including quickly alerting appropriate external agencies, to address serious concerns about pupils' safety in school, at home and in the community. Pupils and families are well supported. The headteacher does not shirk from having difficult conversations with families at times to secure pupils' safety and care.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons, as they move around the school, in the lunch hall and in the exciting and well-resourced school grounds at breaktimes. Pupils are virtually always sociable and kind to one another.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Any incidents are recorded carefully and responded to well. The very few pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour are supported by staff, or by local authority early intervention or behaviour support teams, to help them overcome their difficulties so that they can take part fully in the life of the school.
- From the early years, pupils are provided with guidance on how to interact with others, and the high expectations of behaviour in the school. Pupils respond willingly and can be seen to regulate their own behaviour and that of others in a friendly and helpful way. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and take turns, and care for each other well.
- Virtually all parents and staff who responded to the inspection questionnaires consider that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils enjoy school and their attendance rates have rocketed since the previous inspection. There are several reasons for this improvement. They include: the high expectations of the headteacher that pupils need to attend school; improvements in the quality of teaching; regular celebration events; and active work with families where pupils are at risk of not attending.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The most recent published school performance information for 2015 showed improvement from the time of the last inspection. At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment was well above average in writing and mathematics. It was above average in reading, but not significantly so.
- Previous gaps between the achievements of boys and disadvantaged pupils when compared with other pupils had narrowed well. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally was much narrower. Actions taken this year, including more targeted individual support and improvements in the quality of teaching, have ensured that these gaps continue to narrow successfully.
- Reading was the weakest subject in 2015 because not enough pupils achieved highly and made more than expected progress when compared with pupils nationally. The school has taken action this year to accelerate progress in reading, and current assessments show that over half the pupils are making more than expected progress in their reading development.
- Observations of learning, pupils' books and information teachers have about pupils' achievements show that pupils are continuing to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress in their learning from their often low starting points into school.
- Pupils' sustained improvement is not least due to improvements in the quality of teaching, the way teachers set interesting topics and the wide range of well-planned activities to enthuse pupils to work well in lessons and make good progress. However, some of the most-able pupils do not make the rapid progress expected of them because the activities teachers set them are sometimes not challenging enough.
- Timely interventions and support to pupils who are at risk of falling behind help them to catch up quickly to where they should be. Good-quality support and carefully planned activities for pupils who have special educational needs or disability enable them to progress at a pace similar to that of other pupils.
- Improvements in the curriculum, the quality of teaching and teachers' use of assessment to plan activities that help pupils take an active part in their learning and achieve well, along with pupils' positive attitudes to learning, ensure that they are well prepared for their move to the junior school.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Changes to the early years, particularly since September 2015, have had an impressive impact. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has driven these improvements successfully.
- Children get off to a flying start. Staff do not waste any time settling children quickly because of the successful transition arrangements into school, careful assessment of children's skills on entry, and the strong partnerships developed with parents.
- Assessments show that children start Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding generally below those typical for their age, particularly in their speech, language and communication skills. Children thrive during the year and the vast majority of children are making more than typical progress from their starting points in these and other areas and particularly in their literacy and numeracy development.
- There has been a strong trend of improvement in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception. In 2013 this proportion of children was only two fifths, but this rose to three quarters in 2015 and will be at least similar in 2016. Boys, girls and disadvantaged pupils attain highly and well above similar groups nationally. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is much narrower than the average gap. The focus on children's speech, language and communication skills as well as their writing, reading and number is paying dividends and children achieve highly in these areas.
- Teachers' meticulously kept records track children's progress in key areas of their development. Children's achievements are celebrated in an electronic journal that parents can check at any time online, and in their literacy and numeracy books. Teachers use this information to plan interesting and demanding activities that challenge children to do their best and to develop areas where their skills are not as strong.
- Teaching and provision indoors and outside are of a high quality. Adults arrange activities and resources to stimulate, challenge and sustain children's concentration. Interesting resources such as the 'light-table' and activities such as 'mini-beast explorers' give children opportunities to develop their skills in an enjoyable way. Children were seen thoroughly enjoying using their magnifying glasses to identify and then spell 'tricky words' on the explorers' map.

- Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are safeguarded, and they work closely with parents, and where necessary, external agencies to make sure they meet children's emotional and personal needs successfully. Staff provide one-to-one support or small-group activities for children who need additional help, for example, in developing their large motor skills.
- Children's achievements, outstanding behaviour and the highly positive relationships developed between children and adults stand them in very good stead for their entry into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	114111
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10011993

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Brenda Cullen
Headteacher	Anne Graham
Telephone number	01388 604627
Website	www.cocktonhill-inf.durham.sch.uk
Email address	cocktonhillinfant@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	11 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school when compared to infant schools in County Durham, but smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities has increased since the last inspection.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are supported through the government's pupil premium funding (this is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or for children who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils supported by the school for their special educational needs or disability is slightly above that found nationally. An average proportion has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Since the last inspection, the school day has been extended and the leadership team has been restructured.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by two inspectors at half a day's notice. The inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons across the school, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, a group of middle leaders and six representatives of the governing body. A discussion was also held with an education development partner from Durham County Council.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally throughout the two days of the inspection and spoke formally to two groups on the second day of the inspection.
- They reviewed a number of key documents, including those related to the way the school keeps pupils safe, information on pupils' progress and achievements, leaders' written evaluation of their work and the school improvement plan, curriculum plans, and minutes from governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 18 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's inspection questionnaire, and the views of 17 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector

Julie McGrane

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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