

Inspection of a good school: Cockton Hill Infant School

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

Inspection dates:

4–5 December 2019

Outcome

Cockton Hill Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy, welcoming school. Attendance is good. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe. Behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils work cooperatively together. They listen and respond respectfully to each other. Pupils say their teachers are 'kind' and will help them if they have any worries. Pupils say bullying does not happen at their school.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They have planned a curriculum which is relevant and memorable for the pupils. Pupils learn a lot about their local area. Learning is brought to life through visits. Staff know the pupils well. The staff team work well together to help pupils learn. They want all pupils to do their very best. Pupils are very proud of their learning. They are not afraid to have a try when they find their work difficult. Pupils try hard in lessons.

Staff, pupils and parents are very proud of their school. One parent said, 'It is clear that the staff at the school really care for the children and deliver a fantastic education in a nurturing way. We have nothing but praise for the staff and the wonderful work they do.'

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

The leadership team are a strong team. They care for the staff and pupils. Staff morale is high. Leaders have established a culture in which staff support each other and share ideas. Staff appreciate the help they receive from leaders. Staff say they enjoy working in Cockton Hill Infant School.

Leaders, including governors, want all pupils to achieve as well as they can. Leaders know the school well. They know what they need to do to improve the school further. Leaders have clear plans in place to make things even better.

All staff use a consistent approach to support good behaviour. Pupils generally behave very well. Pupils work well with others and by themselves. Relationships are warm and

supportive.

Leaders have raised the profile of reading. Staff are keen to promote a love of books. The headteacher has bought new reading books which the pupils like. Staff make sure there are a wide range of books available in classrooms and central areas. Pupils enjoy listening to the stories their teachers read. Pupils talk enthusiastically about stories they have listened to.

Phonics teaching is effective for most pupils. Teachers think carefully about the order of the sounds they teach. Teachers explain the links between sounds and letters clearly. Staff pronounce sounds correctly. Teachers know which pupils find reading difficult. They give these pupils extra help. Sometimes, staff do not give enough time for these pupils to blend the words themselves. At times, they provide too much support and blend the sounds for the pupils.

Most pupils are keen to read, but a small number of pupils find reading hard. Leaders know that sometimes books are not well matched to the pupils' needs. At times, reading books contain sounds that pupils do not know. Some struggling readers become too reliant on adults for help.

The mathematics curriculum is well organised. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. Teachers give pupils many chances to practise facts, like number bonds to ten. Pupils have lots of opportunity to solve problems. Pupils enjoy working together, talking about their learning and explaining their thinking.

The school's wider curriculum is thoroughly planned. Teaching is well sequenced to develop pupils' knowledge. Staff have thought carefully about the topics they want pupils to learn. Leaders regularly check that pupils are remembering the important knowledge across subjects.

There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community. This encourages pupils to understand the needs of others. Pupils enjoy rehearsing songs in preparation for their visit to a local hospital. Pupils told me, 'Our smiling faces and wonderful voices will cheer the patients up!'

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support. Each pupil has a precise support plan. Teachers know what help pupils need. Support from adults and practical equipment are often used to make learning easier.

The early years curriculum is effective. It is carefully planned and sequenced. Staff plan activities to help develop language and communication skills. Children enjoy joining in with rhymes and familiar stories. The indoor and outdoor areas are very well resourced. Staff have many great ideas which excite the children and make their learning fun. Children are very happy. They are confident and independent learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture within the school. All staff are up to date with the most recent child protection guidance. Staff get regular safeguarding training. This helps staff to identify the signals that may show a pupil is at risk. Staff know families well. Leaders provide families with effective support. Leaders work closely with other agencies.

Systems for recording information are not robust. Leaders have recently introduced an electronic system to record concerns and/or referrals. Some actions were not recorded onto this new system. The detail in records are not always precise. Leaders recognise that further training is necessary to help staff record information accurately. The headteacher is arranging training for all staff members.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the books that pupils read are too challenging. This can make reading difficult, particularly for some of the less able pupils. Leaders and staff need to ensure that the words in the reading books match the sounds that the pupils know more closely.
- At times, staff give too little time for pupils to blend sounds themselves. Some pupils become over reliant on the adult and do not attempt to articulate the sounds. Staff need additional phonics training, so they are able to provide high-quality support to all pupils.
- The recently introduced electronic recording system is not fully embedded. Record-keeping is not yet reflecting actions taken by the school. Leaders must ensure that all records are meticulously completed. Staff need further training on how to complete records of incidents in the new system.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Cockton Hill Infant School to be good on 10–11 May 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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	114111
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10110842
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Judith Bainbridge
Headteacher	Anne Graham
Website	www.cocktonhill-inf.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2016

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery which caters for 2- to 4-year-olds.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and curriculum leaders. I also held meetings with a representative from the local authority and four governors.
- I focused on reading, mathematics and history during this inspection. I visited lessons with senior leaders and talked to some of the staff from the lessons. I met with senior and curriculum leaders to look at pupils' work. I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life.
- I examined the processes for safeguarding. I checked documents relating to safeguarding on the school's online recording system. I looked at safeguarding policies and procedures. I talked to governors and staff about how they keep pupils safe. I also spoke to many pupils.
- I met with staff to discuss the training they have received, how leaders support them

and how workload is managed.

- I took account of 35 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, including free-text commentaries.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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