

Inspection of a good school: Byers Green Primary School

Wear View, Byers Green, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 7PN

Inspection dates:

21 November 2019

Outcome

Byers Green Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Byers Green is a warm, welcoming community. Pupils say school is a big, happy family where everyone is friendly. Older pupils relish their turn as playground leaders. They enjoy teaching younger pupils new skills such as skipping. Pupils who join the school make new friends.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They respond well to the high expectations adults have of them. Pupils work hard, achieve well and are keen to take responsibility. Adults know pupils well. They are quick to spot if anyone needs some extra attention or support.

The school is calm. Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They say that the occasional disputes between each other are sorted out. Pupils understand what bullying is and are adamant that it does not occur in school. Parents and staff have the same view.

The curriculum provides additional opportunities for pupils. There are many after-school clubs, which pupils enjoy attending. Older pupils look forward to learning to play chess and enter competitions. In music lessons, pupils learn to play two different instruments in their time at the school.

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

Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are in the same class for two years. Leaders provide a suitable curriculum so that pupils do not study the same thing two years in a row. They are reviewing each subject to make sure that curriculum plans contain all the important knowledge pupils need. They are checking that knowledge is introduced in the right order. Leaders know that some subjects, such as music, are better developed than others. They identified geography as a subject which needed to be better planned. Leaders have appointed a new subject leader who has a good understanding of geography.

Leaders enhance pupils' cultural development. Pupils visit places such as Binchester Roman Fort to deepen their subject knowledge. Pupils enjoy music. They learn to play the recorder

and ukulele. They use correct musical terminology such as 'adagio' and 'ostinato' to describe music. Leaders develop pupils' personal skills and attributes. Pupils look forward to becoming responsible for the library. They take part in competitions and learn about teamwork.

In the early years, children settle quickly. They concentrate when they learn new sounds to help with their reading and their writing. They enjoy spotting the letters they know in their names. They are enthusiastic about learning new numbers.

Pupils make good gains in mathematics but changes in staffing have meant that some do not have the same expertise in mathematics. The mathematics curriculum is not implemented consistently. There have not been enough chances to solve problems in some classes. Some pupils misunderstand important knowledge. Leaders know this and have started to take action to help pupils. Their checks have not been regular enough to make sure everyone follows the same approach.

Leaders plan the curriculum effectively to develop pupils' reading and writing. The well-planned phonics programme helps pupils to become confident readers. Leaders make sure that pupils who need more help to become fluent readers get the practice they need. Pupils enjoy hearing the carefully chosen books teachers read to them. These extend pupils' knowledge of the topic being studied.

Leaders make sure the curriculum supports disadvantaged pupils to do well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have work tailored to help them develop their knowledge in all subjects.

Pupils do well and want to come to school because learning is enjoyable. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour and pupils feel safe from bullying.

Leaders and governors know the difficulties of managing a small school. They are very mindful of staff workload. They make sure staff are not asked to do too many new things at once. They know that good teamwork is vital if the school is to continue to be successful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher ensures that there is a culture of continued vigilance to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained to identify any issues with pupil safety. They receive regular reminders on safeguarding issues. They are confident about what to do if they have concerns about pupils' welfare. Governors regularly speak to pupils to check that they feel safe.

Pupils know that it is important to stay safe when using the internet. Teachers make them aware of the dangers of threats such as grooming.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In coming to the judgement, we have taken into account the curriculum changes that leaders are making. Leaders are reviewing each subject to make sure it is relevant for pupils and suitably ambitious. The curriculum is well planned in the correct sequence in many subjects. This is not fully the case in some foundation subjects, including geography. Leaders need to ensure that these subjects are planned in enough detail so that pupils learn and remember important knowledge and vocabulary in the right sequence.
- Curriculum plans in mathematics are not implemented consistently. Pupils have not practised reasoning and problem solving enough. Some pupils do not understand place value well. Leaders need to develop teachers' expertise, so they know how to close the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should check that the mathematics curriculum is implemented consistently more often than they do currently.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged Byers Green Primary School to be good on 9–10 February 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 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	114070
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10097587
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gordon Henderson
Headteacher	William Kirtley
Website	www.byersgreen.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2015

Information about this school

- The school has experienced a number of temporary and permanent staffing changes since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- We evaluated the quality of education by considering the teaching of phonics, early reading, mathematics and geography. We discussed the curriculum design with senior and subject leaders; we visited lessons with the headteacher and subject leader in geography. We also looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. I listened to some pupils in Years 1, 3 and 6 read. We met teachers from the lessons visited.
- We looked at a wide range of documentation including the school improvement plan, self-evaluation document, curriculum plans and information available on the school website.
- We talked to pupils about what it is like to attend the school and observed lunchtime.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked including training records, policies and information relating to child protection. We talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe.
- I held discussions with the governing body and a local authority representative.

Inspection team

Susan Waugh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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