

Choppington Primary School

Eastgate, Choppington, Northumberland NE62 5RR

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, has enabled rapid improvement since the last inspection. He has successfully created a culture of high expectations. Leaders, governors and staff wholeheartedly share his vision of high achievement for all.
- Leaders have effectively improved the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now at least good. This has resulted in pupils' outcomes improving to now be good.
- Leaders use accurate assessment to identify the pupils, especially the most able, who have historically, underachieved. They check that work set for these pupils is supporting strong progress. A high proportion of pupils are currently working at the greater depth of learning in each year group. There has been insufficient time for this to have increased outcomes at the end of key stages.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Adults instil confidence in pupils, enabling pupils to have high expectations for themselves.
- Current pupils are making strong progress in writing. However, previous underachievement resulted in gaps in pupils' spelling knowledge. There are limited opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are currently making good progress across the curriculum. This is because they receive appropriate and targeted support.
- In early years, children make good progress. Sometimes, for example in child-initiated play, independent tasks and developing writing skills, activities do not challenge children sufficiently.
- Governors responded well to recommendations in an external review of their effectiveness. This has strengthened the quality of governance. They know the school well and are committed to continuous school improvement.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite and respectful, showing positive attitudes towards their learning. On occasion, pupils do not take care in the accuracy and presentation of their work.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is exciting and creative. They develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness effectively. Pupils have a strong awareness of fundamental British values.
- Pupils' attendance has improved to be above the national average. Leaders' decisive actions ensured that very small numbers of pupils are regularly absent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers continue to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the most able, to increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English, particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that the presentation and accuracy of writing, across all subjects, is of the highest quality
 - ensuring that inconsistencies in pupils' knowledge of spelling words are diminished, so that pupils can confidently apply spelling knowledge to their written work.
- Enhance the quality of provision in the early years by:
 - increasing the opportunities for child-initiated learning, both indoors and outdoors
 - ensuring that writing activities engage the interest of the children, to help them get off to a good start in their writing
 - ensuring that independent learning tasks are sufficiently challenging, particularly for those who are most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team lead the school highly effectively. Since the headteacher's appointment, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and in pupils' outcomes. This is because all leaders and staff share a vision of high expectations and achievement for all pupils.
- Successful appointments of a new assistant headteacher and new middle leaders have resulted in a strong and united leadership team. They have wasted no time in tackling the areas for improvement since the last inspection. Leaders have ensured that high-quality, targeted professional development and training has been provided for all staff. This includes support for newly qualified teachers and those who are new to the school. Consequently, staff have improved their subject knowledge and they are highly motivated. The strong team ethic, which exists between all staff, ensures that best practices in expertise, knowledge and skills are shared on a regular basis.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is providing a wide range of subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils access many curriculum topics which are relevant and meaningful to them. For example, pupils completed a history project on local coal mining. This engaged the pupils' interests, enabling them to produce work of a high standard in reading, writing, history, art, design and technology. A homework project of creating models, relating to coal mining, provided opportunities for family relatives to support with this by sharing their knowledge and experiences. One parent commented that this 'really brought the local history of the community to life'.
- Leaders also ensure that the curriculum enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as the fundamental British values. Opportunities for pupils to reflect, consider and reason are threaded through all aspects of their learning.
- The SEND coordinator has a detailed system in place to track the needs and learning for all pupils with SEND. The funding is used well to provide a range of support to help pupils access learning with their peers. This has been effective. By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils with SEND made good progress in writing and mathematics and exceptional progress in reading.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding judiciously to support the learning of pupils who are disadvantaged. As a result, the progress rates made by this group of pupils have improved significantly since the last inspection in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have successfully invested their physical education (PE) and sports premium funding to purchase specialist equipment, increase participation in sports and competitions as well as increasing the specific skills of staff. All these support staff in their teaching of sports and PE. Leaders encourage pupils to try new sports, so a wide variety of physical sports and after-school activities are provided. Pupils say that they appreciate this encouragement as they have enjoyed new sports and learned new skills.
- The local authority supported governors in the appointment of the new headteacher and hold him in high regard. The school improvement partner knows the school well

and has provided effective support and challenge since the last inspection. School leaders value the support of the local authority, accessing or purchasing available services linked to the school improvement priorities.

- The vast majority of parents and carers speak highly of the changes that leaders have made since the last inspection. Several parents praised the school for the strong progress their children are now making. One parental response echoed the views of many when commenting: 'Choppington is a fabulous school and I'm so glad that my child gets to attend here.'

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Following an external review of the quality and effectiveness of their work, governors responded decisively to the recommendations provided. They are now proactive in developing their own skills and access regular training. This supports them to be clear on their responsibilities and adhere to their legal duties. They demonstrate a good understanding of their role in challenging school leaders.
- Governors share the high expectations of school leaders in wanting the highest possible outcomes for pupils. They are not afraid to check out the detailed information they receive from leaders to assure themselves of the difference that leaders' actions are making.
- Governors check thoroughly on how the funding for pupils with SEND, or those pupils who are disadvantaged, is used. They check on the rationale behind the spending of the funding and check regularly on what difference actions are making. Governors are aware that, since the last inspection, outcomes and attendance for both pupil groups have significantly improved.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.
- Systems to check on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with children are detailed and well managed. Staff receive regular training relating to safeguarding. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about pupils.
- The designated safeguarding lead and two deputy safeguarding leads all receive regular and appropriate training. The pastoral officer works closely with families and external agencies to ensure that any pupils and families who need guidance are fully supported.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector during the inspection were pleased with the school's procedures to keep their children safe. They were particularly impressed with the information parents received relating to safeguarding. Several parents commented that the school provides information for parents to raise awareness of online safety. For example, a film was screened for parents on the dangers of cyber bullying and online gaming.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the last inspection, there have been several new appointments of staff. This has resulted in a strong team approach across the school. Staff comment positively that they support and learn from each other. All staff members who completed the staff survey during the inspection thought that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled and have strong subject knowledge. They use questioning effectively to extend thinking and deepen learning. This is because leaders have ensured that they receive relevant and targeted training to support them to improve their teaching continuously.
- Strong relationships exist between adults and pupils across the school. Teachers have high expectations for every pupil for outcomes and conduct. One teacher said 'There is a 'no excuses' culture here. We want every single pupil to be the best that they can be.'
- Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities within English lessons to develop and expand pupils' vocabulary. Work in pupils' books indicates that this focus on developing ambitious vocabulary is improving the quality and fluency of pupils' writing. However, pupils' spelling ability is not as strong. Pupils are not secure in some of the spelling patterns which were taught in previous year groups. This means that they can use complex spelling patterns that they have learned recently, but often make errors when they spell more common words.
- Teachers plan writing activities around interesting and creative aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits. Discussions and interactions between adults and pupils expand pupils' understanding of written language. Pupils respond positively in lessons to these discussions. Work in pupils' books shows that, although pupils have been given increased opportunities to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English, this practice is not fully established, particularly for the most able pupils. Books also show that the accuracy and presentation of writing is not as strong as it is in mathematics books.
- The teaching of phonics is consistent across the early years and key stage 1. Staff receive regular training, so their subject knowledge and pronunciation of letter sounds is accurate. Teachers provide a range of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise and apply their phonic knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of reading has been a focus for improvement and is now a strength of the school. Pupils are taught specific reading skills to support them in understanding complex storylines and phrases in the books that they read. This builds firmly upon the strong phonics teaching that is systematically delivered from the early years onwards.
- There is now a consistent approach to teaching mathematics throughout the school. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics lessons. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics has improved over time.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. One Year 6 pupil said: 'This school is like my second family. Adults genuinely care about everyone and older pupils look after the younger pupils.' Pupils say that they feel adults respect them and consider their viewpoints.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils say that the school provides opportunities for them to stay healthy, by encouraging them to participate in sports, to eat healthy school lunches and by having an adult to talk to if they have any worries.
- The majority of parents say that the school deals effectively with bullying. Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying entails and they are taught how to recognise and report it, should it occur. Pupils say that adults take any issues relating to bullying very seriously, therefore pupils are confident that any issues would not persist. School records, checked during the inspection, support this view.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on specific responsibilities, for example sports leaders, house captains or lunchtime monitors. House captains gather the views of all pupils and take requests and ideas to the senior leadership team. For example, pupils expressed concerns about difficulties accessing water during the school day. House captains approached senior leaders to discuss this and now every pupil receives a water bottle from the school. Pupils say that this has made a big difference to their health and well-being. They say that they feel trusted by the adults, therefore they carry out their roles seriously, and with pride.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Since the last inspection, pupils say that pupils' attitudes to behaviour around school and in lessons have improved. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to others.
- In lessons, pupils work well cooperatively, supporting each other and respecting different ideas and opinions. This enables pupils to discuss and debate subject content within a lesson, which contributes significantly to the good progress that they make. Sometimes, pupils' presentation of written work in books is untidy.
- Some pupils say that on occasion, in the playground, some pupils need to be reminded of the school rules and how to behave appropriately. However, they have a good understanding of how adults use the school's systems to manage behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour has improved because adults in school have high expectations for the conduct of all pupils.
- Over time, attendance of pupils has been consistently above the national average. At the time of the last inspection, the proportion of pupils who were regularly absent, or excluded, from school was higher than the national average. School leaders have worked hard to support pupils and families with any issues that may have contributed to regular absences or exclusions. Currently a very small minority of pupils are

persistently absent and the proportion of pupils receiving exclusions are no longer a concern.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the previous inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved significantly and are now good. This is because leaders have focused sharply on improving the quality of teaching, which in turn has improved outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, was above the national average and the highest for three years.
- In 2018, a very small number of pupils were in Year 6. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- Over the past three years, very few pupils have attained the higher standards in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of key stages 1 or 2. Current pupils' books show that the proportion of pupils currently working within the greater depth of learning has increased. Subject leaders check regularly that work for all pupils, particularly the most able, is sufficiently challenging.
- Progress rates in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly since the previous inspection, for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The school's own assessment systems and work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making even stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared to last academic year.
- Pupils acquire strong phonic knowledge. This results in the proportion of pupils attaining the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 being broadly in line with the national average. For pupils who do not meet the required standard, they make strong progress from their starting points.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, in all subjects by the end of Year 6, has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Progress in reading for this group of pupils at the time of the last inspection was well below average. In 2018, it was well above average.
- In 2018, pupils with SEND made very strong progress from their starting points in writing and mathematics and exceptional progress in reading. Work in books of current pupils with SEND indicate that they are continuing to make strong progress in all subjects, but particularly in reading, across the school.

Early years provision

Good

- The headteacher oversees the leadership of the early years, making pertinent evaluations of the quality of teaching and the progress made by children. This has led to accurate conclusions about the quality of the early years and the areas for further development.
- There have been changes to staffing in the early years since September. The newly

forged team has established a vibrant and enticing learning environment for children aged from 2 years, to the end of Reception. The staff have worked closely with the local authority's early years advisor. All practitioners have taken on board the advice provided, which has led to improvements in the quality of provision since the last inspection.

- Generally, a large proportion of children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding which are below those typical for their age. For some children, their speaking, listening and understanding skills are particularly low. Developing these areas has been a focus of provision this year, across all classes in the early years.
- The proportion of children attaining a good level of development (GLD) by the end of Reception has been variable over time and in 2018 it was below the national average. However, the progress that children make from their individual starting points is good. A higher proportion of children are currently on track to exceed the early learning goals in reading and number, compared to last academic year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged children who attained a GLD by the end of Reception in 2018 was above the national average and the highest for three years. This reflects the strong progress made, and the effective use of additional funding to support these children.
- Adults have strong relationships with children and skilfully build children's confidence and self-esteem. Therefore, children are happy, confident and engaged in their learning. Children follow established routines because staff ensure that they clearly reinforce these routines daily. Children conduct themselves well and move purposefully from one activity to another.
- The learning environment, indoors and outdoors, is stimulating and well organised. Staff provide many opportunities for children to play independently or access adult-led sessions. Adults intervene to provide support or guidance. However, at times, adults do not take the initiative to skilfully develop children's independent play by extending children's learning and experiences. Consequently, a proportion of learning time is lost, and some pupils are not provided with enough challenge.
- Children's reading development is a strength of the early years. Children are given challenging activities that allow them to use their phonic knowledge and skills to read words, sentences and phrases. As a result, a higher proportion of children are on track to reach and exceed the early learning goal for reading compared to last academic year. However, independent activities to develop writing are limited. Activities planned for early writing development do not fully engage the children, support them to develop their writing skills or challenge the most able.
- Recent approaches to develop fluency and understanding of number in mathematics in Reception have already started to benefit children's progress in mathematics. As a result, there are a higher proportion of children on track to reach and exceed the early learning goal for number compared to last academic year. When children work in adult-focused activity groups, they practise their skills and are challenged to solve problems. However, independent tasks for mathematics do not provide the same amount of challenge, particularly for those who are most able.
- Provision for children who are two years old is planned effectively. Activities are safe and follow the interests of the children. The staff have designed an inviting learning

environment and learning areas to meet the children's needs. There is a strong focus on developing gross motor skills, communication, listening and early language skills because assessments have informed staff that these are the areas that children need to develop. There are quiet areas for children to rest or nap if required and a separate, well-equipped outdoor space to explore.

- Risk assessments are carried out daily in classrooms and in the outdoor learning spaces. All statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Parents of pupils in the early years say that their children settle well and enjoy school. Parents say that staff are approachable and accessible to parents daily. Parents say that they feel well informed about their children's progress and have opportunities to show what their children can do at home.

School details

Unique reference number	122180
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10087541

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kieran Ball
Headteacher/	Daniel Nelson
Telephone number	01670 823197
Website	www.choppington.northumberland.sch.uk
Email address	admin@choppington.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much larger than the national average and in the top 20% of schools in the country.
- The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average for both SEND support and those who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is situated in an area of high deprivation (highest 20% of schools in the country).
- The school has a Nursery class and provides places for two-year-olds.
- The school offers a range of clubs and activities after school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across all classes and key stages in a range of lessons. All teaching and learning were observed jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher.
- The inspector talked with parents face to face during the inspection. The views expressed by 19 parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, including two free texts, were also considered.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspector observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The inspector listened to several pupils read, scrutinised pupils' work across a wide range of subjects and talked with pupils during lesson observations. The views of pupils were considered during informal and formal discussions.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, pastoral officer, office manager, subject leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector studied a wide range of the school's own information and documentation including the self-evaluation document, improvement and subject action plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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