

Lynnfield Primary School

Grosvenor Street, Hartlepool TS26 8RL

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has been weak, especially in key stage 2. Pupils are not well prepared for secondary school as a result.
- While overall academic standards are now improving, gaps remain in pupils' knowledge and skills as a result of a legacy of historically weak teaching.
- Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of key stage 2 is below average. Many pupils lack a love of reading, lack confidence and fluency, and read infrequently.
- New systems and approaches to the teaching of phonics are not yet embedded to ensure that all pupils make a strong start in their early reading skills.
- Teaching has not been consistently strong over time. The quality of teaching remains variable as many initiatives to improve teaching are new and not yet applied consistently.
- Work set by teachers is not always well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Sometimes it is too easy or lacks challenge.
- The skills of middle leaders do not yet allow them to effectively lead changes to the school's curriculum and embed new assessment systems in all subjects.
- Although the quality of provision in the early years is good, opportunities for children to learn outdoors need to be improved and further developed.

The school has the following strengths

- Under the inspirational, skilled and determined leadership of the executive headteacher, the school is now improving quickly. An ethos of high expectations has been created.
- Leaders' and the federated governing body's ambition to provide the best experiences for pupils is now being translated into effective action and is improving teaching and learning.
- Children are making good progress in the early years. They take pride in their work. The two-year-olds' provision plays an important role in fostering children's language development.
- The nurture and care for all pupils is integral to the school. Pupils are happy and say that they feel safe. The school has ensured that their spiritual, moral and social development is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that all pupils make strong progress and reach higher standards, especially in key stage 2
 - eliminating historically weak progress and low attainment in reading so that all pupils achieve well.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that recently introduced initiatives to further develop the quality of teaching, including in reading, are embedded and applied consistently in every class
 - establishing an appreciation and love of reading across the school so that all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, by the end of Year 6
 - embedding new strategies in the teaching of phonics so that all pupils make a strong start in reading
 - further developing the quality of provision in the early years outdoor learning environment.

- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - continuing to strengthen the role of middle leaders in leading the ongoing developments in the school's curriculum and assessment systems
 - ensuring that the current review of the curriculum results in pupils acquiring age-appropriate skills and knowledge in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment, the skilled and doggedly determined executive headteacher has been unwavering in her mission to secure an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. She has worked with spirit and vigour to transform the culture of the school. She has been extremely well supported by the invigorated senior leadership team, a purposeful governing body that has been strengthened following federation, and officers from the local authority. All leaders are demonstrating a clear capacity to lead forward the current improvements and secure higher levels of attainment for pupils.
- Swift and decisive actions to address weaknesses in the quality of provision have been taken by the leadership. This has included the introduction of many new initiatives and effective partnership work with local colleagues, including the sister school in the federation. However, not all initiatives are consistently effective across the school and some are in need of further refinement. A number of the teaching staff are new to the school. Work to secure consistently good-quality teaching is ongoing.
- Until the appointment of the executive headteacher, the school's leadership and management had not adequately addressed entrenched weaknesses in the quality of teaching. This resulted in the standards reached by pupils in their work, and the rates of progress made in learning, falling below those found nationally. This was especially the case in key stage 2 and in reading. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, were not fulfilling their potential.
- As a result of the leadership's ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching, current pupils are now making improved rates of progress in their learning. There has been too little time to see improved outcomes for key stage 2 pupils or to completely plug gaps in some pupils' knowledge and skills that have resulted from historically weak teaching.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and forensic in detail. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is frank and honest. They know exactly what the current weaknesses are and their self-evaluation allows them to plan improvements to eliminate these weaknesses.
- The school development plan is extremely detailed and carefully monitors the effect of planned actions on outcomes for pupils in their learning. Regular evaluation, and the careful scrutiny of actions and termly milestones to be reached, ensures that no time is wasted in leading further improvements.
- Although the school's curriculum is broad and balanced and all areas are covered, it does not ensure that subject-specific skills and knowledge are planned and assessed effectively and progressively across year groups. Faculty leaders are involved in the ongoing curriculum review and restructure. Their role needs to be developed so that they are more able to lead agreed changes to curriculum design and embed new assessment systems.
- Over the year, the school provides a range of after-school clubs that further enhance

pupils' access to the wider curriculum. These include gardening and cookery, homework club, breakfast club, school council, dance fit club, art club, various school performances and eco-warriors attending to environmental issues. There are also a number of rolling clubs for sports such as archery, table tennis, cricket and football.

- Leaders have worked hard to devise and implement a new system for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Following careful analysis of this assessment information, leaders are now managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils overall now match those of their classmates in most year groups. As is the case for non-disadvantaged pupils, disadvantaged pupils' progress in learning needs to be stronger so that they reach higher standards, especially in key stage 2.
- Effective leadership has resulted in good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are supported well. Their needs are identified early and their progress, which is mainly good, is accurately analysed by senior leaders. Consequently, the special educational needs funding is used increasingly effectively by leaders.
- The physical education and sport funding for schools is being used well. There has been a marked increase in pupils' participation in sporting activities and competitive sport between local schools. The number of inter-school competitions has doubled to over 30. The school's 'sports crew' enthusiastically organises a range of games during break and lunchtime. The school has been able to renew and purchase additional equipment to allow many varied sports activities to run during break and lunchtime, as well as after school.
- The school has benefited from the good-quality support offered by the local authority, which was triggered by rigorous reviews of the school's performance. Working alongside the school's improvement adviser, local authority officers are playing an important role in the school's rapidly improving performance.

Governance of the school

- The school now benefits from having a skilled, dedicated and proactive governing body. Governors have been honest about the decline of the school to a position where it required improvement. This has enabled them to learn from mistakes and develop an unrelenting focus on holding leaders to account. The frequent meetings of the governors' Raising Achievement and Community Partnership committee have been very effective in providing challenge and support for the executive headteacher. Governors acknowledge the very effective support for the school from the local authority.
- Governors regularly review their own effectiveness, including identifying strengths on which to build. They bring to the school a range of appropriate professional skills and experience. This enhances their effect on school improvement. Governors are pushing forward to become even more effective. They make it their business to know about the work of the school through regular visits and analysing data. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Staff work very hard to ensure that pupils are safe and that their welfare is protected and nurtured. Very effective teamwork between leaders and the parental support adviser permeates every aspect of school. It is based on a detailed knowledge of the pupils, but also recent relevant research into adverse childhood experiences and the different elements of trauma.
- Staff are quick to identify, report and record any concerns, no matter how small, and all concerns are effectively followed through. The school's online system for reporting concerns provides a comprehensive chronology of all issues for any child in school, including any behavioural issues.
- Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff. They are vigilant in their duty to keep pupils safe. Policies, procedures and records are of good quality. Staff training is thorough and up to date. This includes ensuring that all recruitment procedures are watertight. All adults have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for keeping children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been weak. It has resulted in pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable or fulfilling their true potential. There are still variations in the quality of teaching across the school, with examples of both strong and effective teaching, but still a few occasions when teaching is not good enough.
- Teaching requires improvement because, in some lessons, a minority of pupils lose concentration and become disengaged or distract other pupils' learning. This can be because work is not pitched at the right level for pupils. Activities can be too hard, or too easy. The capacity of school leaders to eradicate weaknesses in teaching is substantial.
- Over time, teaching has lacked sufficient challenge, especially in reading and mathematics. This has prevented some pupils from developing their ability to work at a greater depth in their skills and knowledge in all subjects, and reach higher standards of attainment. A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is taking root. Pupils are becoming skilled in applying their mathematical skills in reasoning and problem-solving activities. Standards are improving.
- The teaching of reading over time has been poor. Many current pupils, especially older pupils, lack interest, confidence or fluency in reading. Many do not demonstrate a love of reading. The school has worked very hard in recent months to address these entrenched weaknesses. A new system to ensure the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics is becoming embedded and must continue. Already, the signs are that children are now getting off to a strong start in their early reading skills.
- Reading has a more prominent profile in the school. The library has been reorganised and new books purchased. Teachers are increasingly skilled in using a variety of reading materials to teach inference and comprehension skills. In a Year 2 class, pupils were engaging purposefully in a discussion around the main character in the class book they were reading. Pupils were able to articulate how the main character was feeling –

hurt, troubled and isolated – using important information from the text.

- In mathematics, basic skills of number and calculation are taught well and consolidated regularly. Teachers make good use of pictorial resources to develop pupils' basic skills of place value and understanding of patterns in number used in calculations. Pupils are also increasingly skilled in using and applying their mathematical skills. In Year 6, pupils were seen applying their knowledge of algebra to find the length of one side of an irregular quadrilateral, when given one side and the formula for two of the other sides. Other pupils were investigating coordinates of two-dimensional shapes and generating a rule for finding the coordinates for the centre of a square when drawn on squared paper.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school places as a high priority on, and works very effectively to ensure that, pupils' physical and emotional well-being are continually being developed. The leader of provision for pupils with SEND, the assistant headteacher and the parental support adviser form a formidable team that is passionately dedicated to ensuring high levels of care and support for all pupils. This has a direct and positive effect on learning for these pupils.
- The small number of pupils based in the Butterfly room make good progress because of their strong, trusting relationships with adults. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs. The sense of care and nurturing is tangible. The lead inspector enjoyed his toast and chat with the pupils in this setting.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils grow in confidence during their time in school, acquiring a confident approach to learning. They embody the school motto of 'The more you try the higher you fly'. Pupils say they enjoy school because teachers make learning 'fun and interesting'. They thrive in the well-ordered and positive school environment. Displays are of good quality, are bright and attractive, and support learning well. Pupils' work is celebrated and valued.
- Pupils who made their views known said that they feel very safe in school, a view echoed by virtually all parents and carers who completed the school's recent questionnaire. Pupils talked confidently to the inspector about their knowledge of e-safety – 'zip it, block it, flag it'. Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other, valuing their classmates' opinions and working cooperatively in lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are good. The leader responsible for this aspect of pupils' learning and development has carefully planned activities and topics for each year group. These are recorded in class books. For example, the Year 4 book contained work on democracy, designs for a logo to represent the school motto, resolving conflict, the Eid festival and Remembrance Day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils told an inspector that they enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their improving attendance. Although rates of attendance over time have been below those found nationally, there has been a steady improvement over the last three years. A small number of pupils had been persistently absent. The school has worked hard to address this issue. There are now no groups of pupils who are at a disadvantage through lower rates of attendance. Pupils and parents understand the effect of missing time in school to learn. The school recognises that it needs to continue to work hard to ensure that pupils' rates of attendance continue to improve.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning, and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly and deftly addressed. Occasionally, a small minority of pupils lose concentration and become disengaged from learning. Pupils were crystal clear that behaviour is good in school, and that there is no bullying at all. They stated that occasional disputes and arguments are sorted out quickly.
- The good relationships that are nurtured ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Most pupils are polite and have good manners, holding doors open for adults and visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together. No one is left out.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the last three years, Year 6 pupils' progress from their previous starting points in reading and mathematics has been much too slow. It has been below the progress of other pupils with similar starting points nationally, and well below in reading last year.
- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics have also fallen. As a result of historically weak teaching, there currently remains a legacy of inconsistent achievement in some year groups, especially for older pupils.
- Historically, pupils in key stage 1 also did not achieve well. This was reversed last year when attainment for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, was average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
- Leaders and staff are working hard to reverse this decline and eradicate remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information show clearly that, in all key stages, current pupils are making much stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics this academic year.
- New approaches to teaching are taking hold. Pupils who had fallen behind are catching up quickly. As a result, for the vast majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, standards are improving.
- The school has worked hard to introduce an effective and informative system for analysing pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics, which has been operative since the spring term. Leaders know that further work is needed to gain an accurate picture of pupils' progress across the wider curriculum.
- In some years, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has lagged somewhat behind

that of other pupils nationally. Evidence from the inspection shows that current disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress across the school, in the same way as their non-disadvantaged classmates, is improving quickly.

- In the past, too few pupils have reached higher standards in their learning at the end of key stage 2. Over time, teaching has lacked the necessary challenge and this has restricted pupils from deepening their skills and knowledge. In 2018, very few Year 6 pupils attained the higher standard in reading or mathematics. The most able pupils have not achieved well enough. Inspection evidence shows that in most year groups, including Year 6, the achievement of the most able pupils is improving.
- Effective leadership and good-quality provision for pupils with SEND ensure that these pupils make good progress, even if in small steps, from their individual starting points. Activities are carefully matched to their individual needs and abilities. Identified pupils have a team of staff assigned to them in what the school calls a 'team around the child' approach.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check has been just below that found nationally, but fell well below last year. The introduction of a rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics is quickly paying dividends. Provisional assessment information shows that a much larger proportion of pupils in Year 1 have met the expected standard this year.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the school's early years setting enjoy the good-quality learning opportunities provided for them, and they learn and play happily together. They are eager to explore and investigate, are happy to share and take turns and they display good behaviour. The children engage well in all activities, both inside and outside.
- Adults working in the setting are adept at developing the learning provided for children based on accurate assessment of children's stages of development, and usually maximise learning opportunities for all. The early years leader has worked hard to ensure that the indoor learning environments are of high quality, especially in the Nursery. The children clearly love being outdoors, even on a rainy day. Leaders have rightly identified that further work is needed to ensure that the quality of outdoor provision and organisation matches the good quality seen indoors.
- Most children start in the early years with skills and knowledge which are below that expected for their age. The two-year-olds' provision is a welcoming and stimulating place in which children's speech and language is developed well. Adults model vocabulary very effectively, as seen with the small group who were finding shapes outside. This gets the children off to a good start in their learning.
- As a result of careful observations, choice of activities, good teaching and probing questioning, most children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1. Children are now making good progress in the Nursery. One group were seen to be not only matching objects that began with the letter C, but also writing the letter using a correct pencil grip. Children's achievement is improving across the early years.

- Adults in the setting observe children carefully, and skilfully build on their interests to plan the next steps in learning. They support children well through prompts and skilful questioning. They work alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions. Children show persistence in learning and mainly stick to tasks. They display good levels of cooperation. Most are inquisitive and curious and enjoy playing and exploring together.
- The early years leader, teachers and teaching assistants share the same passion and desire to see young children thrive. Basic skills in reading, writing and number are fostered effectively. The leader has a clear understanding of the strengths in the early years and has identified areas for improvement. This is leading to effective actions being taken to ensure that the early years provision continues to improve.
- The school has strong and effective links with parents. Most parents are extremely supportive of the school, and work in partnership to support their children's learning. The school's online interactive portal allows it to share important moments of learning, and parents reciprocate by uploading contributions from home.
- Safeguarding practices are very effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age, and the very effective safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of legal welfare requirements; children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	111590
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10087525

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	391
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Tilling
Executive headteacher	Mrs Sue Sharpe
Telephone number	01429 275 122
Website	www.lynnfieldschool.org.uk
Email address	headteacher.lynnfield@school.hartlepool.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from pupil premium funding is above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The school's part-time provision for Nursery children operates in the morning and afternoon. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school recently became part of a hard federation with Golden Flatts Primary School.
- Six new teachers joined the school at the start of this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including those observed jointly with the executive headteacher. In addition, inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and mathematics leader.
- The inspectors held meetings with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and the executive headteacher. They also met the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and other school leaders, including subject leaders, and the early years leader. The inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors viewed a range of documents including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils, and the school's view on how well it is doing. They also reviewed the school development plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and responses to the school's own questionnaire for parents conducted earlier this year. Inspectors viewed the 45 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 14 responses to the pupil questionnaire. In addition, parents' comments, via the free-text facility, were analysed. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Nimer	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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