

Kielder Community First School

Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 1HQ

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher leads the school with compassion, skill and a keen moral purpose. She leads by example and demands the very best for pupils at the school. She is constantly seeking to improve the school.
- The school offers a varied and interesting curriculum. It is expertly and imaginatively taught by staff who are constantly seeking to improve.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils feel safe, and are safe. They are very well cared for by highly trained and effective staff.
- Governors are very skilled and know the school and the community it serves very well. They are very effective in supporting and holding the headteacher to account.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar, and often better, progress than their peers. This is because staff know their needs very well and remove barriers to success wherever they can.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities that help pupils understand more about themselves and their place in modern Britain and the wider world.
- Pupils are keenly aware of the needs of others. They are very well behaved. They love school and relish learning. Attendance is above the national average.
- The headteacher and the governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and next steps and evaluate its performance accurately. The school is well prepared for its move to primary school status.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the part that reading has in their learning. They enjoy books and have many opportunities to read at school and at home.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the care and the range of opportunities that the school offers their children.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is much higher than the national average. Because of outstanding leadership and teaching, these pupils make very strong progress from their starting points.
- Children in early years get off to a flying start because of strong leadership and carefully focused and challenging teaching.
- The school is very well supported by the local authority.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide even more varied and carefully focused subject-specific writing opportunities and challenges for all pupils, including the most able, so that they make stronger progress in writing across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with compassion, skill and a keen moral purpose. She has led the school effectively and decisively through uncertain times. She leads by example and demands the very best for pupils at the school. As a result, the school is making strong and sustained progress.
- The headteacher is supported by an increasingly insightful, energetic and loyal governing body. Together, they are clear about what needs to be done to assure continued improvement to the service the school offers to its pupils and the wider community.
- The headteacher and governors are acutely aware of both the advantages and challenges presented by a small, geographically remote first school. The headteacher recognises the need to engage with, and seek the support of, the local community. She is also very aware of the need to work with other educational partners and schools to help ensure that Kielder pupils receive a full and rich experience of the world. She has developed very fruitful relationships with a wide range of partners.
- The school's curriculum is varied and interesting and continuing to develop. This is particularly apt in the light of the move to primary school status and the need to deepen, still further, pupils' experience and readiness for the world, beyond, but including, Kielder. A rich set of extra-curricular activities and trips underpins the more formal curriculum and helps give pupils vital experience of the wider world and other ways of being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is ensured. This is a real strength of the school.
- The headteacher, working with her staff, has created, and maintains, a very inclusive ethos at the school. This ethos focuses on making sure that all pupils' needs are carefully catered for. Parents and carers recognise this. They show very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They are particularly positive about the levels of care that the school shows to their children and the strong and open communications between school and home. Parents said that their children were safe and happy at the school.
- The support for pupils with SEND is very well led. There is a well thought-out and appropriate balance of focused intervention and quality first teaching. Pupils' needs are diligently identified. The effect of support is regularly reviewed and carefully measured to ensure that these pupils make the progress that they should. There are open and honest relationships between the school, parents of SEND pupils and outside agencies.
- Pupil premium funding is focused effectively by the school to ensure that barriers to learning are, as far as possible, removed. As a result, the relatively few disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their peers at the school.
- Staff morale is high. All staff that inspectors spoke with talked in detail about the support they receive from the headteacher.
- The headteacher ensures that the school uses its allocation of the physical education (PE) and sport funding successfully. It not only provides pupils with opportunities to develop their sports skills and experience, but also to further extend staff's expertise in the teaching of PE. The funding helps pupils and staff from the school to receive

weekly specialist PE teaching and training at Bellingham First school, Kielder First's closest neighbouring school, 16 miles away.

- The school is well supported by the local authority. The authority provides regular support to help assure the quality of education.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is very effective and well led. It has detailed knowledge of the school and the community it serves. Because they are well informed, governors can both support and challenge the headteacher. The headteacher, working with the local authority, has put in place effective, open and straightforward systems for monitoring the quality of pupils' education and well-being. Governors use this information robustly.
- Governors play an active part in the school's work. They know its strengths and are accurate and realistic in their understanding of what still needs to be done to improve the school even further. They visit the school regularly and individual governors are linked to aspects of the school's work, such as safeguarding and the impact of pupil premium funding. Governors are preparing effectively for the school's change to primary status.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The systems for checking the suitability of visitors and staff recruitment are strong. There are rigorous checks in place to assure staff's suitability to work with children.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff and governors are well trained and skilled in safeguarding matters. There are regular training sessions to keep staff informed and up to date. The headteacher is very well supported by the designated safeguarding governor in this aspect of the school's work.
- The headteacher has created, and maintains, a culture in the school where all staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and of the procedures that keep pupils safe. As a result, staff promptly identify, and appropriately support, potentially vulnerable pupils. Where appropriate, the headteacher, as the designated safeguarding lead, engages very effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Staff have consistently high expectations and display excellent subject knowledge. They are determined that all pupils will do well. They energise pupils with their knowledge and genuine engagement with learning. Pupils rise enthusiastically and successfully to this challenge.
- Staff are keen to improve. They develop their skills and knowledge through active partnership with other schools. These partnerships help staff to further develop their teaching skills and confirm their judgements and assessment of pupils' work.
- Relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils are appropriately relaxed and

friendly. Pupils enjoy the challenge of the classroom.

- Staff, both teachers and support staff, are skilled in their use of questioning. The inspector saw many examples of staff using focused and quietly insistent questioning to draw out detailed responses from pupils. Staff were explicit with pupils about the value of asking 'how' and 'why' rather than duller 'what' questions, to get the most out of their learning.
- Phonics is very well taught. Staff make the sessions interesting, engaging a range of senses. The inspector saw staff picking up misconceptions quickly to ensure that progress was strong and sustained. Pupils were very keen to share their growing phonic knowledge.
- Reading is a significant strength of the school. Pupils have many opportunities to read together and to explore how writers create mood and effect in their writing. Pupils welcome this. They also like the structured approaches to individual reading that the school offers.
- The school's classrooms are attractive and well cared for. They are exciting places to learn in. Pupils recognise this and respect their learning environment. The walls of the school are enhanced by examples of pupils' high-quality work and other attractive displays that support and celebrate learning. There are learning walls in the classrooms that give pupils clues about how they can move forward in their learning if, for example, they are stuck with a mathematics problem or want to know a spelling. This aspect of classroom routines helps develop pupils' resilience and autonomy as learners.
- Writing is a strength across the school. From children's very earliest years, staff plan a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing, extend their vocabulary and practise sentence structures.
- Inspection evidence gleaned from pupils' books suggests that writing associated with the curriculum beyond English and mathematics, although developing very well, is not yet as advanced as it could be. Pupils, especially the most able, are not being given enough opportunities to write at length in subjects such as geography and religious education. As a result, they are not developing their subject-specific knowledge and skills in these subjects. The school is very aware of this and plans are well advanced to address this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are kind. They are polite and alert to the needs of others. They get on well together and with staff at the school. Pupils spoke with real pleasure about how much they enjoyed school and how well the staff look out for, and look after them. They told the inspector that staff at the school would be there for them if they ever had a problem. The school is inclusive and welcoming. Parents spoke warmly of the school and the ways in which staff, including the headteacher, make themselves available.
- Because of the school's diligent actions, pupils have a good understanding of the range of forms that bullying can take. Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school. They

also say that, were it to occur, it would be promptly and well dealt with by adults at the school. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe, and know how to keep themselves safe, in a range of situations, including when online.

- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle. Lunches are cooked on-site and are made from healthy ingredients. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet because of the work of the school and the skill of lunchtime staff. They enjoy being together around the school lunch tables. Children from Reception to Year 4 are seen chatting and at ease with each other. The inspector was made very welcome during lunch. He was asked about what books he liked to read.
- The school's work to remove barriers to pupils' learning and well-being is outstanding. Staff at the school, supported by governors, are diligent and relentless in supporting pupils and families who, from time to time, are experiencing challenging times.
- Despite the small size of the school and its rural setting, pupils are keenly aware of their place in, and responsibilities to, the wider world. Pupils told the inspector that because of their lessons, and other experiences at school, they knew about other lifestyles, cultures and ways of being. They also said that their work in supporting a range of charities helped them see what it is like to be somebody else. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Displays around the school are lively and reflect the successes of pupils at the school. Displays also provide a clear sense of the high standard of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects and the extra-curricular activities they access.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Staff have high expectations of behaviour and personal conduct. Pupils rise to these expectations. They are fully embedded into the life of the school. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are marked by kindness, understanding and mutual respect.
- Pupils behave very well in and around school. In the classroom and the playground, they are thoughtful and take care of each other. They have fun but are very clear about work time and playtime. They collaborate well and show pride in their school. Pupils wear their school uniform tidily. There is no litter.
- Because of the efforts of staff and the attitude of pupils and parents, overall attendance is above the national average and continuing to improve. Pupils told the inspector that they love coming to school. They said that they know it is important to attend school regularly. Very few pupils come close to being considered at risk of being persistently absent. The school deals with this with appropriate firmness and understanding.
- The atmosphere around the school is exciting and purposeful. Pupils enjoy learning together.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- This is a very small school. As a result, differences in the performance of small numbers of pupils have a significant effect on results over time.
- Historically, children make good progress in early years from their various starting points. This has been the case for the last three years. Direct evidence from this inspection shows that both Nursery and Reception children make very good progress from their starting points because of the effective and carefully targeted work of the school. Children settle well and respond well to the care and challenge of expert staff. They get off to a flying start.
- Historically, Year 1 pupils do well in the phonics check. The number of pupils meeting the expected standard differs from year to year. Direct evidence from this inspection shows that pupils are taught to read with care and precision. They love reading and engaging with books.
- The number of pupils who took the end of key stage 1 tests in 2018 was very small. Historically, by the end of key stage 1, pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this group was very high.
- Progress continues to be very strong for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Reading and writing are particular strengths. The proportion of boys in these classes is very high. All pupils respond very positively to a challenging diet. They write neatly and at length in a range of subjects across the curriculum. They enjoy reading and read regularly at school and at home. They respond positively to a varied mathematical diet.
- Across the school, the number of disadvantaged pupils is small. They make very good progress from their starting points. All staff are aware of the needs and barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Teaching is carefully focused on supporting them. Inspection evidence and the school's own information show that, over time, disadvantaged pupils make at least similar, and often better, progress than their peers.
- The school is outstanding in the way it supports pupils who move to the school during the school year, or in years other than Reception. These pupils' needs and strengths are promptly and effectively identified. Staff are expert and relentless in their commitment to ensuring that they make rapid and sustained progress.
- Pupils with SEND make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is because the work they are given to do is carefully targeted on what they need to learn to succeed. The school also works very closely and in partnership with these pupils' parents. A significant number of parents of pupils with SEND told the inspector that they were very satisfied with the care and challenge that their children received from the school.
- Links with partner schools, particularly Bellingham First School, are strong. The weekly sharing of expertise and teaching with Bellingham extends and deepens pupils' knowledge and skills in subjects such as PE, drama and modern foreign languages.
- An extensive scrutiny of current pupils' books in a wide range of subjects, and in all years, shows that pupils, particularly the most able, make good and outstanding progress. There is some variability in the presentation of pupils' work. There are fewer opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English. However, overall across the school, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is good and, often,

outstanding.

School details

Unique reference number	122233
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10087661

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Sophie Blackburn
Headteacher	Fay Hartland
Telephone number	01434 250257
Website	www.kielderfirstschool.org.uk/
Email address	admin@kielder.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2014

Information about this school

- Kielder Community First school is much smaller than the average-sized first school. As a result, there are very few pupils in each year group. There is a class comprising Nursery, Reception and Year 1 in two adjoining rooms and a class consisting of Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average.
- The school will become a primary school from September 2019, providing education for pupils up to the age of 11.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

- The school provides up to eight nursery places in flexible morning, afternoon and all-day provision. The school also provides provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes across the school. Almost all these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 read. He also talked with pupils across the school about their experience of reading, both in and out of school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The inspector met with an officer from Northumberland local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including that related to safeguarding, achievement, the quality of teaching, attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and conduct at breaks and lunchtimes. He spoke informally with pupils about their experience and attitudes to school during these times. The inspector also spoke more formally with a group of Year 3 and 4 pupils about school and the range of opportunities it offered them to explore and enjoy learning.
- The inspector took part in and observed two daily acts of worship and two wake up/shake up sessions.
- The inspector, alongside the headteacher, scrutinised a very wide sample of pupils' work from the current academic year from all year groups and in a range of subjects.
- The inspector spoke with nine parents and carers at the start and end of the school day to seek their opinions of the school's work and care for their children. He reviewed seven responses to the school's own surveys of parents' views.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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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