

Inspection of a good school: Mountfield Primary School

Kirkwood Drive, North Kenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3AT

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 2024

Outcome

Mountfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Elaine Boardman. The school is part of SMART Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Colin Lofthouse, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Charles Alexander Christie.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school provides exceptional care and support to its pupils and their families. Staff liaise with a wide range of professionals to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Staff are particularly attentive to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. The school uses research-based initiatives to manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils are happy in school. They are safe, secure and nurtured.

The school is ambitious for its pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language. A new curriculum is having a positive impact on the knowledge and skills of the pupils who attend regularly. Pupils benefit from the many educational visits the school provides, including visits to local places of worship, art galleries and museums. In key stage 2, pupils' social skills are developed well during their regular, outdoor and adventurous residential experiences.

The provision for children in the early years is exceptional. Children who experience learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes gain the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in Year 1 and beyond. Some pupils do not attend regularly enough to become fluent early readers in Year 1.

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

The school's phonics programme is well resourced. Pupils read books that are matched accurately to their phonics knowledge. However, too many Year 1 pupils do not achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Some of these pupils miss too many phonics sessions because they are absent from school. The content of the school's phonics programme is not delivered with sufficient consistency.

Recently, the school took assertive action to implement a revised curriculum. Foundation subjects, such as geography and music, are now delivered discretely. The knowledge, skills and vocabulary to be taught in each subject are set out for staff precisely. The curriculum's emphasis on retention and retrieval of knowledge and information is working well. Pupils are using and applying their 'sticky' knowledge confidently. For example, during this inspection, pupils in Year 6 explained the meaning of civil disobedience accurately to their curious friends in Years 4 and 5.

The implementation of the new curriculum is succeeding because of the training provided for staff. In mathematics, for example, leaders have delivered training in chunks over an 18-month period. They have given staff time to teach the new content. Leaders have then checked to ensure that pupils are learning and remembering more. It is clear that pupils are learning well because of these actions.

Pupils' learning is enhanced further by their attendance at the extra-curricular clubs provided by the school. These clubs include yoga, cookery, multi-skills, rugby and fencing.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. The school identifies and meets the needs of pupils with SEND, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, well. The pastoral team seeks support from external professionals tenaciously. Parents and carers appreciate the school's efforts. One parent, echoing the views of others, said, 'The school is fantastic in the support they offer.'

Children behave impeccably in the early years. They understand and abide by the school's rules, routines and expectations. The vast majority of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 behave well in lessons and during breaktimes. Staff support well the very small minority of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. During the inspection, the school launched a new initiative to help pupils to self-regulate their behaviour. Following the launch, the pupils were very keen to show that they could indicate their emotional well-being.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Too many are persistently absent. These pupils miss out on too much vital learning. They do not learn the sticky knowledge that their classmates learn. They fall behind and, by the end of key stage 2, are not ready for the demands of secondary schooling.

The provision for pupils' personal development is a strong aspect of the school's work. Staff ensure that pupils respect and tolerate each other's individual differences. Many pupils carry out roles of responsibility in the school, including as school councillors, mini-police and sports leaders. All pupils in key stages 1 and 2 learn about staying safe in the community during their annual visit to the fire and rescue service's provision. The world of work is promoted well throughout the school. For example, the children's 'Little People, Big Ideas' careers work in the early years includes the police, firefighters, teachers and project leaders of the future.

Leaders evaluate accurately the school's strengths and areas that require further development. The impact of new initiatives on staff's well-being and workload is considered fully prior to, and during, implementation. Members of the local governing

board, as well as trustees, support and challenge leaders knowledgeably. They understand and carry out their statutory responsibilities thoroughly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's phonics programme is delivered inconsistently. This means that some pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that all staff that deliver the phonics programme have the expertise, knowledge and confidence to do so as intended.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. These pupils miss out on vital learning and fall behind their classmates. The school should continue to work with parents to ensure their children benefit from all that the school provides.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Mountfield Primary School, to be good in March 2015.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143269
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10320379
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charles Alexander Christie
Headteacher	Elaine Boardman
Website	www.mountfield.smartacademies.net
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school is one of eight schools in SMART Multi Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils eligible to receive additional government funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- Many pupils join and leave the school at times other than at the beginning and end of the academic year.
- The school does not use any alternative providers of education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator.
- Meetings were held with three members of the local governing board, two trustees (including the chair of trustees), the CEO and the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils first.
- The inspector evaluated survey information from staff, and from parents on Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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