

Inspection of New Hartley First School

New Hartley, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE25 0RD

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are happy and nurtured by staff. Pupils live out the school's character virtues which include empathy, honesty and respect. Pupils treat each other with kindness. Staff support pupils who struggle to manage strong emotions effectively. Pupils behave very well in lessons and at social times. They know that staff will help them if they have any worries.

The school has worked diligently to create an ambitious curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning. As they progress through the school, they gain secure foundations, including in English and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

The school council enables pupils to have a say in what happens in school, for example choosing new clubs such as running and construction. Through the school's core curriculum values of aspirational, sustainability and equality, pupils learn about their place in the world. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to look after the environment, including planting seeds and growing vegetables. Pupils develop a strong understanding of equality as they progress through the school. The diverse range of books support pupils to learn about important historical figures such as Rosa Parks. This helps pupils to learn to challenge inequality.

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

In the last two years, the school has had many changes in staff, including at leadership level. The new leadership team has redesigned the school's curriculum to ensure that pupils build knowledge as they progress through the school. Leaders have developed teachers' subject expertise.

Overall, pupils achieve well. Lessons include opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned previously. In most lessons, including English and mathematics, teachers check to see how well pupils are learning. They adapt teaching to ensure any gaps in knowledge are addressed swiftly. However, in some areas of the curriculum, checks on pupils' understanding are not consistently precise enough. Sometimes gaps in learning and misconceptions are not spotted, so some pupils struggle to move on to new learning. This prevents pupils from achieving all that they could in these subjects.

In the early years, staff support children to learn important knowledge and develop the skills they need effectively. The school rightly prioritises the development of language and communication. Staff check children's understanding and support language acquisition well. However, when children are in the wider provision during independent learning times, there are some occasions when staff do not make the most of opportunities to further develop children's language. Interactions between adults and children do not always help children to practise what they have learned using the ambitious vocabulary that leaders intend.

The school prioritises reading. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Books are matched to the sounds that pupils are learning in their phonics lessons. Here, staff use checks to identify how well pupils are learning. Staff know the precise gaps that pupils have in their reading knowledge. Additional reading support is provided for those pupils who need it. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers. This helps pupils to appreciate and make good use of the wide range of books available in school.

The school goes to great lengths to prioritise inclusivity. The school works with parents and carers to help children make a confident start in school. Working closely with parents and other professionals, the school swiftly identifies any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through this partnership work, the school gains important information about how to support these pupils. Staff make adaptations to their teaching approaches so that pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum. Children learn routines in the early years to help them to concentrate well on their learning. Across the school, classrooms are purposeful learning environments.

The school's character education is particularly strong. Pupils understand the importance of being the 'best version of themselves'. They learn about healthy relationships, including how to resolve disagreements. This helps pupils to get along together. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions in a variety of ways such as by visiting different places of worship. Pupils feel that everyone is made to feel welcome at their school. They are proud of their roles as sports and play leaders. The school provides a range of extra-curricular clubs to develop pupils' interests, including sports, drawing and book clubs.

Leaders and governors alike have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils. Governors check that leaders' actions continue to improve the school. This helps to shape the priorities that drive future school improvements. Staff are positive about the school. Staff appreciate that the school considers their well-being. They work well together to make sure that any changes made benefit all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the checks made on pupils' learning do not fully identify where some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. In these subjects, this prevents pupils from achieving as highly as they could. The school should ensure that any key gaps in pupils' subject knowledge are identified and addressed effectively in these curriculum areas so that pupils learn as well as they could in all subjects.

- In the early years, during independent learning times, there are times when staff do not make the most of opportunities to extend children's language. This means that some children do not practise using new words in their interactions with adults. The school should ensure that staff develop the necessary expertise to ensure that interactions consistently support the development of children's communication and language.

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	122224
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10370363
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kim Ashby
Headteacher	Keri Dowdney
Website	www.newhartley.northumberland.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes in staff since the previous inspection.
- The chair of the governing body is new to role.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and some other leaders.
- The lead inspector held discussions with the chair and vice-chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with the school's improvement partner from Northumberland local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum and scrutinised work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents in Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with some parents informally.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katrina Morley

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025