

Inspection of Fordley Primary School

Dudley Drive, Dudley, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 7AL

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 November 2024

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy positive, caring relationships with staff. This helps them to feel safe and happy in school. Pupils show resilience in the face of challenges and the school's 'respect' values support them to develop positive character traits. The majority of pupils demonstrate respect for staff and their peers. Pupils are clear that bullying is not a problem in the school. Pupils have confidence in adults to resolve any issues of bullying or name-calling quickly.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive in lessons and take pride in their work. Many pupils strive to achieve the school's high expectations and achieve well. They can talk about their aspirations for the future, such as becoming a teacher or an artist. From the early years, pupils learn about potential careers. For example, children in the Reception Year talk about the work of paramedics, doctors and fire fighters.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to contribute to both the school community and the wider community. Some pupils have worked with local volunteers to develop a nature reserve, for example. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about educational visits, particularly residential ones. They know that these enhance their learning and help them to develop skills such as teamwork and perseverance.

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

The school has developed an ambitious and broad curriculum that is designed to enable all pupils to achieve well. Staff provide frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. This helps pupils to make connections between current and prior learning and ensures that their knowledge builds over time. Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in learning the curriculum. The school has a clear system for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use this system effectively to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support that they need. This includes support from external specialists when necessary. The school considers how the curriculum prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. For example, when constructing the history curriculum, the school considered what pupils will learn in key stage 3.

Teachers receive focused training. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge and choose appropriate resources to support learning. The school trains all staff to teach phonics. Consequently, adults use consistent teaching strategies to ensure that pupils quickly learn new sounds. The school acted swiftly to address poor outcomes in phonics in 2023. This resulted in much improved provisional outcomes in 2024. Skilled staff support pupils who fall behind with phonics to catch up with their peers. Once pupils have mastered phonics, they receive high-quality teaching of reading. This helps them to develop their fluency and comprehension skills. Most pupils achieve highly in reading by the end of key stage 2. However, this is not the case in writing. Staff do not consistently address weaknesses in pupils' early writing skills. This means pupils are often moved on to complex writing tasks before they are ready.

In the early years, children benefit from warm relationships with staff. Children are settled and happy in all classes. Starting from the two-year-old provision, there is a focus on developing children's language and communication skills. However, some interactions between adults and children are not precise enough. Staff do not consistently develop children's language or learning effectively.

Attendance is a priority for the school. The school works tenaciously to communicate the importance of good attendance to parents and carers. It has introduced a range of initiatives to encourage good attendance. As a result, it is steadily improving, but there are still a number of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. It provides opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of faiths. This learning is enhanced by educational visits to places of worship, such as a local mosque. Through the school's values, pupils learn the importance of respecting difference. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. They talk confidently about how to lead a healthy lifestyle and have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests by attending extra-curricular clubs, such as coding, fencing or archery.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to ensure that all pupils receive the education that they deserve. Leaders, including governors, engage well with staff and are considerate of their workload and well-being. The school is currently experiencing significant challenges with its building. Staff support each other well to overcome these challenges. There is a strong sense of teamwork and collegiality in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently address weaknesses in pupils' early writing skills. This includes motor skills, pencil grip, letter formation and basic sentence construction. As a result, pupils are often moved on to complex writing tasks before they are ready. The school should ensure that teachers focus on developing and securing pupils' physical strength and basic writing skills before expecting them to progress to more complex writing activities.
- In the early years, some interactions between adults and children are not precise enough. They do not develop children's language or learning effectively. The school

should further develop staff's expertise so that interactions across the early years provision are consistently high quality.

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	108611
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10340038
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jacqueline McHanwell
Headteacher	Claire Withers
Website	www.fordleyschool.com
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the governing body has appointed a new headteacher.
- The governing body restructured the senior leadership team in September 2024. The school now has two deputy headteachers.
- Over the last year, the school has experienced significant disruption due to issues with the construction of the building. This meant that, for some months, a number of pupils were educated at other schools in the area. All pupils have now returned to the school site, but many classrooms are in modular buildings outside of the main school building.
- The school has a nursery which admits children from the age of two. The two-year-old provision has opened since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Childcare provision is available before and after school. This is run by school staff and overseen by the governing body.

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, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body and the school development partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, at the breakfast club and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The school's offer for pupils' personal development was considered.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included any free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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