

# Forest Hall Primary School

Delaval Road, Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 9BA

## Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 2017

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	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across year groups and subjects, and this contributes to unevenness in pupils' current progress in key stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not consistently pitch work at a level that enables pupils to make consistently good progress or that provides them with sufficient opportunities to work at a greater depth of understanding.
- Pupils do not make good progress in mathematics across all year groups as they are not given regular opportunities to apply their reasoning skills or move on in their learning.
- Although improving, outcomes remain variable for disadvantaged pupils, who remain more likely to be absent than their peers.
- New initiatives are building pupils' reading and comprehension skills, although there is still variance in progress between classes and for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in the wider curriculum, as variability remains in their opportunities to develop deeper knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects, including history and religious studies.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and her team responded resolutely to a period of staffing turbulence to secure improvements across all key stages in 2017.
- Leaders and governors have implemented clear improvement plans that are already securing improvements in pupils' progress and in the proportions of pupils achieving expected standards at key stage 1 and 2.
- Effective leadership and good teaching have enabled pupils to make good and improving progress in the early years.
- New leaders are developing expertise through effective partnerships with improvement partners that are supporting improvements in teaching and pupil outcomes.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, by:
  - pitching work at levels that enable pupils to work at greater depths of understanding
  - moving pupils on more swiftly in their learning when they are ready to experience new knowledge and skills
  - ensuring that pupils' misconceptions are promptly addressed
  - implementing new strategies in mathematics to enable pupils to apply problem-solving skills and make stronger progress across all year groups
  - enhancing pupils' reading skills by developing their inference and deduction skills and their abilities to respond to more challenging texts.
- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - further developing the roles of new leaders so that recent improvements in teaching can be extended consistently across year groups and subjects
  - strengthening the curriculum so that improvements in science and geography can be extended to other subjects
  - intensifying strategies to support disadvantaged pupils and their families to diminish differences in their attendance and outcomes from those of their peers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has had to contend with factors beyond her control that led to a period of considerable staffing turbulence over the past two years. This contributed to a dip in outcomes in 2016. She has worked tirelessly with new leaders to strengthen teaching and raise standards, and this resulted in improvements across all key stages in 2017. While overall outcomes still require improvement, leaders have addressed many key priorities and have placed the school on a pathway for further progress.
- Leaders have worked closely with local authority partners to develop expertise and build sustainable capacity for improvement. This is already contributing to improving teaching and increasing proportions of pupils achieving expected standards across all subjects.
- Leaders have monitored many aspects of school performance closely and have an accurate view of areas to address as part of their improvement plan. External moderation of pupils' work at key stages 1 and 2 found teachers' standards to be accurate. While some aspects of school self-evaluation are slightly generous, leaders are aware of improvement priorities and have already achieved success in raising attainment across key stages.
- Teachers value their professional development and opportunities to develop their expertise with external partners. This training supported improving outcomes in 2017.
- While leaders have introduced initiatives that have improved outcomes in mathematics, these are not consistently implemented across all year groups and insufficient proportions of pupils have opportunities to work at greater depth.
- The headteacher has refined performance management arrangements to link teachers' performance targets more closely to whole school priorities. This contributed to the stronger outcomes achieved by pupils in 2017.
- Leaders have worked with local authority partners and experts to develop the leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A new leader is in place and is working closely to align support and target funding in order to improve provision for these pupils. While more effective support and more regular reviews of progress are in place, overall progress for these pupils is still variable.
- Leaders have used pupil premium funding to support a range of initiatives and interventions to improve progress and attendance for pupils. While there is evidence that disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make improving progress, this funding has not secured good progress for these pupils over time.
- Leaders are using assessment-tracking systems to provide teachers, leaders and governors with termly reviews of pupils' progress. Increasing moderation is assisting teachers in developing a more accurate awareness of standards.
- Strong leadership in the early years is contributing to higher quality teaching and improving outcomes.
- Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum. A cohesive assembly programme and personal, social and health education teaching enhance pupils' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development. Pupils develop social responsibility through fund-raising activities, sports leadership and by providing support for younger pupils.

- Leaders have used additional funding to support pupils' engagement in sport to increase participation in a wider variety of sports and physical activity, including dance, gymnastics, skipping and basketball. Pupils have had access to specialist coaching in a range of sports to further develop their skills and physical fitness.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors with high levels of educational expertise are bringing fresh challenge to leaders that is contributing to improving provision and outcomes. They review pupils' progress on a regular basis to gauge the pace of improvement.
- Governors show a clear understanding of strategic priorities and of strengths and areas for improvement. They work with the local authority and school improvement partners to gain an objective insight into progress. Governors ask increasingly challenging questions about aspects of performance in order to hold leaders to account.
- Governors provide clear support as well as challenge. In 2016/17, they responded to dips in reading and phonics outcomes by releasing funding to support training and additional interventions. This contributed to clear improvements in these areas at the end of the year.
- Governors have reviewed the impact of additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and there are some signs that current pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, their influence in this area has not yet secured rapid improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors take their responsibilities for pupils' safety very seriously. They carry out appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of adults working on site. Leaders pursue concerns over pupils' welfare carefully and have introduced new systems to record this more effectively. Safeguarding training is up to date, and personal, social and health programmes support pupils' safety and welfare.
- Pupils feel safe and happy in school and appreciate the work of the school to support their social and emotional health. The vast majority of their parents agree that their children are safe and well supported. One parent captured their views in praising the 'strong sense of community' where 'children feel safe and able to express themselves'. Pupils believe that bullying is extremely rare and that staff act effectively on the rare occasions bullying does occur.
- Leaders actively promote pupils' welfare and safety. They have taken action to raise pupils' awareness of safeguarding issues, including the provision of special assemblies led by staff from the NSPCC. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how to stay safe online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between phases and subjects and contributes to varying rates of progress across subjects and for different groups of pupils.
- Teaching does not pitch work at a level that enables middle ability and higher ability to make consistently strong progress and work at greater depth. While leaders have recognised this in their improvement plans, teaching does not enable these pupils to move on in their learning rapidly enough.
- Although leaders are introducing new schemes of work to improve teaching in mathematics, these changes have not led to consistently effective practice across the school. Teaching does not challenge pupils thoroughly, as they are given fewer opportunities to work at greater depth. As a result, pupils' progress remains uneven.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have responded to training to enhance pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds in their phonics teaching. They model sounds effectively and develop pupils' abilities to recognise the links between letters and sounds. These approaches contributed to improving outcomes in the phonics screening check in 2017.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read across key stages 1 and 2. Key stage 2 pupils read with fluency and understanding although at key stage 1 some readers were less fluent. Teaching does not consistently develop pupils' reading comprehension and inference and deduction skills deeply across all year groups.
- Teachers develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning across the school. Teachers model writing with great care across the school and provide a range of strategies to support pupils in writing for differing audiences and purposes in a range of genres. While these approaches are supporting improving progress in writing, some pupils can be over-reliant on teacher support. Pupils' writing displays more weaknesses in spelling and punctuation when these scaffolds are removed.
- New leaders are working with the headteacher and external partners to review the quality of teaching and implement more timely improvements. This is contributing to clear improvements in many aspects of literacy and in the increasing proportions of pupils reaching expected standards across both key stages.
- Teaching provides pupils with discrete opportunities to work scientifically and explore aspects of geography with increasing depth. However, pupils do not consistently access subject-specific knowledge and skills in sufficient depth in subjects such as history and religious studies.
- Pupils benefit from a variety of opportunities to develop their sporting skills and physical fitness through effective partnerships with specialist external providers.
- Teachers regularly set homework which pupils feel supports their learning. The vast majority of teachers provide feedback in line with the school's policy. However, teachers do not consistently pick up on misconceptions and this can result in pupils failing to learn from their errors.
- Leaders and teachers have worked with external partners and specialists to improve support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These partnerships are supporting pupils in areas such as the development of their speech

and language skills and stronger systems are in place to both map out and measure the impact of support. Some of these developments remain at an early stage of development and progress for these pupils remains uneven.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The curriculum provides regular opportunities to promote pupils' awareness of their personal, social and emotional needs and special assemblies serve to further promote pupils' awareness of their welfare.
- Pupils develop a sense of responsibility through roles as sports leaders and in providing support for younger pupils. Every Friday, Year 6 pupils work alongside pupils in the Reception class, to provide support and develop social skills.
- The school's learning mentor works with pupils and parents to develop pupils' self-confidence. A range of interventions also helps to develop pupils' language and communication skills, such as the lunchtime Lego club.
- Pupils develop a sense of social responsibility through a range of charity work and community activities. They raise money for charity and sing carols in the community and at local residential homes. Pupils' physical welfare is promoted through access to a range of sports. The school's work with the Newcastle United Foundation has promoted wider fitness levels and pupils are able to develop expertise in a wide range of sports.
- Pupils believe that bullying is rare and they are confident that, if it did occur, teachers would address their concerns effectively.
- Pupils are able to discuss the actions that the school has taken to help them keep safe. They have a good awareness of how to keep safe online.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are frequently expressive and articulate, and show a willingness to discuss their learning. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 were confident when reading aloud to inspectors.
- Pupils show a pride in the school environment and in many aspects of their work. They take great care with their writing, with writing books showing high standards of presentation and a good use of cursive handwriting.
- Teachers encourage constructive learning behaviours and behaviour systems reward positive attitudes to learning. Pupils worked alongside teachers to develop a new behaviour system, with clear rewards for good learning habits.
- The rare instances of misbehaviour are addressed effectively. Pupils typically work productively, although a minority can become distracted when work lacks challenge. On some occasions, deeper learning behaviours are not fully developed, as pupils are not as clear on the steps they can take to work at greater depth.
- Overall rates of attendance are now in line with those seen nationally, an improvement

on the dips seen in recent years. Case studies show that leaders and learning mentors have worked with pupils and parents to improve the attendance of pupils who previously had lower rates of attendance. Improvements are becoming apparent in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Rates of absence and persistent absence are beginning to reduce, although disadvantaged pupils remain much more likely to be absent than their peers.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because current pupils do not make strong progress across a range of subjects and differences exist between year groups and between different groups.
- Although the proportions of pupils achieving expected standards in mathematics increased at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2017, current progress remains variable. Pupils are not given regular opportunities to apply their reasoning and problem-solving skills across year groups and this can limit progress for middle- and higher-prior-attaining pupils.
- Leaders have introduced new initiatives to raise expectations for writing across the school. Teachers model writing assiduously and provide thorough support for pupils to build and develop their writing. This has contributed to improving standards across the school, although variance in spelling remains. On occasions, some pupils rely too heavily on teacher support and this can limit their independence as writers.
- Over time, teaching does not provide sufficient challenge to enable pupils to work at greater depths of understanding. The proportions of pupils working at greater depth at key stage 1 remain below that seen nationally. Leaders are introducing greater challenge into the curriculum but this is not consistently implemented across all year groups.
- After a period of turbulence, leaders and teachers achieved much success in improving outcomes at both key stages 1 and 2 in 2017. The proportions of pupils reaching expected standards were in line or above those seen nationally. Progress for all pupils improved, although variance persists for particular groups of pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently strong progress. The proportion who have achieved the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 has been well below the national average for the past two years. Although there is evidence that interventions are beginning to improve outcomes for current pupils, differences in their attainment and progress persist across subjects and phases and have not diminished rapidly enough.
- Leaders introduced initiatives in 2016/17 to improve the quality of phonics teaching and this resulted in improvements, with 86% of pupils achieving the required standard. Pupils listened to read fluently and with expression, although wider progress in reading remains variable for different groups of pupils.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is mixed. Stronger processes are improving provision and work in books reveals that pupils' needs are being met more effectively, enabling some pupils to make improving progress. However, the overall picture is more variable, with pupils' progress weaker in



external assessments in reading and mathematics in 2017.

- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make varying progress, as they are not given consistent opportunities to work at greater depth.
- Leaders have introduced new initiatives to increase opportunities for pupils to explore science and geography in greater depth. While there are emerging signs of impact in these subjects, pupils do not develop subject-specific knowledge and skills in the wider curriculum in subjects such as history and religious studies in sufficient depth.
- Outcomes in the early years are improving, and, in 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development rose to a level that was in line with that seen nationally.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Strong and clear leadership in the early years is contributing to effective provision that is improving outcomes for children. As a result of thorough planning and effective teaching, children make good progress and achieve levels of development in line with those seen nationally.
- Children in the Nursery are happy and confident in their play and in their learning. Children demonstrated considerable concentration and good motor skills while pressing play dough into chocolate and cake moulds or filling containers with sand. They were able to talk about their learning and describe key colours.
- Children benefit from additional experiences that stimulate their interest and imagination. On day two of the inspection, they talked enthusiastically about their pantomime visit earlier that day.
- In the Reception class, teachers and teaching assistants model sounds effectively and encourage children to develop their understanding of the links between letters and sounds. Teachers match work to pupils' abilities, with some pupils working on letter formation of individual letters and others successfully producing emerging three-word sentences.
- Children demonstrate positive learning behaviours from an early stage. They share resources and support one another in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants know their children well and have a keen understanding of when to intervene to develop learning and when to enable children to play and learn more independently.
- Teachers monitor children's progress closely and record this accurately. Children's work and progress is captured through a wide variety of tasks and activities. This work shows that children make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate picture of children's abilities and learning needs and pitch activities in a manner that enables children to make good progress.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. The ethos of care and support that defines much of the school's work extends to the early years.



## School details

Unique reference number	108605
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10032120

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Martin Lee
Headteacher	Ms Carmel Parker
Telephone number	01912 008 341
Website	<a href="http://www.foresthallprimary.org.uk/">www.foresthallprimary.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:ForestHall.Primary@northtyneside.gov.uk">ForestHall.Primary@northtyneside.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

- The school runs a breakfast club and provides wraparound care for nursery children. A variety of after-school clubs are also on offer.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons, covering all classes in the school. The headteacher accompanied the lead inspector on a number of observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also met three members of the governing body, including the chair. He met a group of pupils at lunchtime on the first day of the inspection. The lead inspector also talked by telephone to the local authority school improvement partner and met a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school on day two of the inspection.
- Inspectors extensively examined the quality of work in a wide range of books. They discussed pupils' work and their learning with them in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and information relating to pupils' achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 free-text responses from parents. They also took into account 17 responses to the pupil questionnaire and nine responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Nelson

Ofsted Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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