

Inspection of Eppleton Academy Primary School

Church Road, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH5 9AJ

Inspection dates: 6–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they love to attend Eppleton Academy. They told us that the school has improved since the last inspection. Teachers expect pupils to aim high and achieve well. Staff support pupils to reach those expectations. Positive relationships help pupils to feel confident.

Pupils behave well. They adhere to the three behaviour rules: 'be respectful, be responsible and be safe'. Pupils show their commitment to these rules in their actions as well as their words. Pupils say that bullying doesn't often happen, but if it did, staff would not tolerate it. Pupils are understanding and welcoming of pupils from different backgrounds. One pupil said: 'We don't think that differences matter here.' The school ethos and curriculum promote this view.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are confident and have sensible attitudes. By the time they reach Year 6, they are ready for secondary school. Various educational visits and visitors help pupils to consider a range of occupations. Pupils shared their high aspirations of the future careers they might follow.

Parents describe the school as 'welcoming', 'happy' and 'safe'. Several parents commented on the improvements that leaders have made. One parent said staff have 'every child's best interests at heart'.

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

Leaders have a resolute vision for excellence. Several staff and leaders have joined the school since the last inspection. All staff receive high-quality professional development. They believe pupils can succeed and pupils now achieve well.

Leaders have made many improvements to curriculum design. Mathematics, English, PSHCE, science and history have a strong curriculum offer. Teachers are clear on what to teach in these subjects and in which order. Pupils' results in national tests across the school improved over three years. In some subjects such as art, computing and music, the curriculum is not as well developed. Leaders have only recently started the process of redeveloping these subjects.

Leaders' long-term plans for all subjects include end points for pupils to reach. In English, mathematics and science end points are set for pupils to reach a higher standard. In subjects beyond these, goals set for pupils to reach are only at the standard expected for their age.

Leaders place high importance on reading. Leaders have invested in high-quality training for staff. This has ensured a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Pupils read age-appropriate books. Pupils in the early stages of reading access books with sounds and words that they already know. This means that all pupils read with confidence. Pupils who make the slowest progress receive extra practice to help

them to catch up. In 2019, pupils' attainment in reading in key stages 1 and 2 was the highest for three years. Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2019 improved to be in line with the national average.

A new leader and new staff have made huge improvements to the early years. Leaders have sought advice from external consultants. This has improved the activities that staff provide. The outdoor learning environment is also better. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved. In 2019, this was in line with the national average.

Leaders have improved mathematics. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They now teach mathematical concepts in a logical way. Pupils get the chance to return to areas of mathematics on a regular basis. They can explain how they gain more knowledge each time they revisit. This is because new learning builds upon what pupils already know or can do. In 2019, pupils' progress in mathematics across key stage 2 was significantly above average. Many pupils say that mathematics is their favourite subject.

Pupils enjoy science lessons. Teachers make useful connections between science and mathematics. For example, pupils use graphs and charts to record their science work. Long-term plans for personal, social and health education are well sequenced. Pupils have good knowledge and remember previous learning. Pupils make strong progress in this subject.

Staff provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils' attendance declined in 2018 to be below the national average. It is currently broadly in line with the national average. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school. This is mainly due to pupils taking holidays during term time. Leaders work with the local authority to issue fixed penalty notices. Leaders are aware that improving persistent absence is a priority.

Governors bring a wide range of skills to their role. They say that this helps them to hold leaders to account. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors access regular safeguarding training. This includes raising awareness of child criminal exploitation or radicalisation. Staff understand, and follow, the procedures for raising safeguarding concerns. They record information in a factual and accurate way. Leaders follow up any concerns with timely and appropriate actions. This provides helpful support to vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils say that school is a safe place and adults help them to feel safe. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about.
- There have been rapid improvements in many subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils are now achieving well in these areas. However, the content of some subjects, for example music, computing and art, is in the very early stages of development. Leaders should ensure that the coherently planned and sequenced curriculum which exists in English, mathematics, history and science is embedded across all other subjects of the national curriculum.
- Leaders plan sequential units of work effectively for expected, and higher, standards in English, mathematics and science. In subjects beyond these, leaders should identify the end points that the most able pupils can be expected to achieve.
- Leaders have worked hard with families to tackle high absenteeism. They have had some success with overall attendance, which is now broadly average. Leaders still need to work with parents to tackle the high proportion of holidays that are taken in term time.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	138213
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10110586
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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ellen Hagan
Headteacher	Kim Bushby
Website	www.eppletonacademyprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 July 2017

Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher, early years leader and SENCo are new to their roles since the previous inspection.
- Several new staff have been appointed since the last inspection. These include all staff in the early years and two newly qualified teachers in key stage 2.
- The school was last inspected in July 2017. It was judged to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- As part of this inspection we considered early reading, phonics, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- We discussed the curriculum design with senior and curriculum leaders. We visited lessons with senior leaders. We met with the SENCo and early years leader. We met with teachers and teaching assistants from the lessons we visited, including those who are newly qualified. We talked to staff about their workload.
- We met with the chair and a member of the school's governing body and the

school improvement partner. This included a telephone conversation with the school's leadership advisor. We also met with groups of pupils, including listening to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 3.

- We looked at the school's systems and documents relating to safeguarding. We checked training records and referrals to the local authority. We talked to staff about their understanding of how to keep pupils safe.
- We checked attendance and exclusion rates. We looked at the school's system to log behaviour and bullying incidents. We discussed actions leaders had taken to resolve related incidents.
- We spoke to parents at the start of the school day. We considered 16 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, including free-text commentaries. We also considered 16 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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