

# Inspection of a good school: Spittal Community School

Main Street, Spittal, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 1RD

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Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

## Outcome

Spittal Community School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school CARE motto, 'Create, Achieve, Respect and Enjoy', spreads through all aspects of school life. This is a warm, friendly and welcoming school. Pupils are proud of their school. Parents and carers share this view. One member of staff reflected the views of many when they said, 'At Spittal Community School we are one big, inclusive family.'

Leaders set high expectations of what pupils should and can achieve. Leaders work hard to place the school at the heart of the community. Pupils are happy and keen learners. They enjoy a wide range of trips and activities, including to the 'beach school' and a recent community-based arts project. Pupils enjoy their lessons, especially in reading and mathematics.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare. It is dealt with quickly and fairly by staff should it occur. Pupils are polite and considerate. They hold doors open for others and greet visitors with a smile.

Lessons are rarely interrupted by others. Pupils enjoy playing and working hard alongside their friends during social times and in lessons. Parents and pupils say that they trust staff to deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils' attendance is improving.

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

Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced from Reception to Year 4. Teachers are confident in helping children develop their basic number facts and knowledge. Pupils' chances to use these skills to solve problems are well developed in some classes, especially in key stage 1, but they are not as well developed in key stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They spot any gaps in pupils' learning and respond quickly, providing extra support to pupils when needed.

Pupils love to read. From the moment children step foot in Nursery to the point at which

they leave the school in Year 4, pupils are immersed in books and stories. Leaders place high importance on developing pupils' love of reading. Pupils enjoy weekly visits to the local library and storytime at the end of each day. Teachers select books carefully to make sure that they link with the topics that pupils learn.

Pupils use their phonics knowledge to help them to read well. Staff make sure that pupils use sounds accurately. Parents are sent weekly newsletters about how to help and support their child to read at home. Children are given books that are well matched to their reading ability. This helps them to read with confidence. Pupils understand what they are reading. They read out loud with skill and expression. Pupils who find reading tricky say that they enjoy it. Pupils who fall behind get extra help so that they catch up quickly.

Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. These plans identify the knowledge, skills and key vocabulary that pupils will learn in each subject so that they know and remember more over time. Teachers ensure that pupils get plenty of chances to revisit and recap their previous learning. They make sure that pupils are secure in their learning before they move them on to another topic or activity. In geography, pupils can explain different climate zones, 'biomes', and how these link to different areas of the world such as the rainforests. Some pupils are able to explain in depth their understanding of ecological issues. However, pupils' ability to show their understanding of geography is better developed in some classes than others. Teachers are not consistent in what they expect pupils to do in some subjects, including in music and modern foreign language lessons.

School leaders are determined to place relationships at the heart of school life. High expectations of behaviour help pupils to enjoy school. Bullying in all its forms is well understood by pupils. Pupils know and talk about other religions and cultures. They learn about the importance of respecting differences. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. However, in lessons, pupils do not always get the chance to discuss and clarify issues they are aware of from home or on the news.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Staff understand what they need to do to support these pupils. Parents appreciate this support.

Governors are passionate about ensuring that the school is at the heart of the community. They understand the school's strengths and what needs to improve. Staff feel well supported by leaders and governors. They are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of safeguarding. All staff know it is their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Leaders carry out the necessary checks on staff to ensure that they are safe to work with children. Leaders keep safeguarding at the forefront of staff minds through regular updates and online training. The systems for identifying and helping pupils who need extra help are secure.

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

## **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects, but expectations of what pupils can do vary from class to class and subject to subject. For example, in geography, the expectations of the work pupils can produce are not consistent between classes. Leaders need to build on the actions they have already taken to further train staff and build their confidence in teaching all subjects to the same high standards.
- The most effective practices in mathematics are not consistently applied across all classes. For example, the variety and complexity of problem-solving and reasoning activities seen in key stage 1 are not fully reflected in key stage 2. School leaders should ensure that the most effective practices are identified and shared more widely between staff to help pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 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 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 are 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 122185   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Northumberland   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10110671   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | First  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 9   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 160  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Geraldine Cowan  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Wendy Kiff   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.spittal.northumberland.sch.uk/">www.spittal.northumberland.sch.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 7 July 2015  |

## Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs is similar to that found nationally.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day for pupils.
- A Community Powers Nursery has been added since the last inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I looked at a range of documents, including those relating to attendance and safeguarding. I also checked the school's central record, which includes the checks made on staff to ensure they are safe to work with children.
- I spoke with pupils in lessons and at playtimes. I also spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- I looked at the 32 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke to a number of staff individually about what it is like to work at the school and reviewed the

18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

- I looked in depth at reading, mathematics and geography. This included talking to curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I also listened to children read.

### **Inspection team**

Jonathan Brown, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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