

# Inspection of Howletch Lane Primary School

Pennine Drive, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2NQ

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Howletch Lane strive to embody the school's vision of 'creating futures together'. Pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy very positive relationships with adults. These high-quality relationships ensure that the classroom environment is productive and purposeful. Pupils show respect to adults and to each other. Pupils enjoy a high level of pastoral support. This allows them to thrive.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils are starting to benefit from a wide range of improvements to the curriculum. However, many pupils still do not achieve all that they should. This impairs their readiness for the next stage of learning. Pupils understand the new behaviour system. They told inspectors that this has made behaviour much better in the school. When bullying does occur, staff deal with it quickly.

Parents speak positively about the way that the school engages with them. They are now more involved in the life of the school. One parent summed up the comments of others by saying, 'It is so nice to come into school and join in with the activities my children are learning about.'

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

The school's curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of pupils. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has a focus on early reading and phonics. Pupils develop confidence and fluency in reading as they move up through school. Older pupils now benefit from a more focused approach to advanced reading skills. For example, well-trained staff skilfully model strategies for pupils to use in their reading comprehension skills. However, published phonics and reading outcomes for 2023 were below national figures. The recent improvements made to the teaching of phonics and reading are not reflected in these outcomes.

In other curriculum areas, crucial elements of pupils' learning and their readiness for the next stage of education do not meet the school's expectations. Published outcomes in writing and mathematics, for example, are below national figures. Pupils' recall of prior learning can vary. In physical education, pupils talk about their prior learning with clear understanding. They apply prior knowledge and skills in their lessons. In some other subjects, pupils' retention of knowledge is not as secure. Assessment in some curriculum subjects is not used to precisely identify and address gaps in learning to help pupils with their recall of knowledge. Recent improvements made by the school are still in their infancy.

The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) supports pupils with a diagnosis of autism well. Staff know the pupils well and put tailored provision in place to meet their needs. However, the support plans for some pupils with SEND in the wider school do not link closely to their specific needs. Targets for these pupils are too broad and the information teachers need to support pupils is not as precise as it should be. This limits how well teaching can address pupils' needs and these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The school prioritises communication and language in the early years. Adults model language and vocabulary effectively. They encourage children to use this language in their own play. For example, children in the Nursery Year role play the story of Goldilocks. They retell the story using the vocabulary and expression they have heard modelled by adults. The curriculum across the early years takes account of children's lower starting points. Many progress well through this curriculum. However, some are not well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time they leave Reception.

Leaders have made a number of improvements since the previous inspection. They have quickly identified key priorities and taken effective action to address these. Governors are committed and fulfil their roles with diligence. They provide challenge and support to school leaders. Staff feel well supported around workload and well-being. There is a real sense of 'team' at Howletch Lane.

Lessons proceed without disruption. Pupils engage well with their learning. The very youngest children in the early years quickly settle into the classroom routines. Pupils who display challenging behaviour are well supported by trained adults. The school is tenacious when following up on absence. It takes effective action to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently or severely absent from school.

Pupils enjoy a range of educational visits. These broaden their knowledge of the local area and the school's curriculum. The 'Howletch 100' sets out 100 experiences that pupils should experience in their time as part of the school. These include meeting a firefighter, flying a kite and having a campfire. These further enhance the wider curriculum for pupils. Pupils also enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities which develop their interests and talents. They demonstrate respectful attitudes to those of different ethnicities, faiths or religions. As one pupil concluded, 'You have to respect everyone. Treat people the way you want to be treated.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The support and provision for some pupils with SEND do not meet their needs. This means that these pupils do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. The school should ensure the support and provision for these pupils more closely match their specific needs.
- Over time, there has been a decline in pupil's achievement. This means that many pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. The school should monitor the recent improvements made to the curriculum carefully to ensure more pupils achieve in line with expectations and are ready for the next stage of education. This includes children in the early years.

- Assessment in some foundation subjects is not used with sufficient precision to identify and address gaps in learning. This means that misconceptions are not addressed fully and pupils' development of knowledge and skills is not secure. The school must ensure that the new assessment system is used effectively in the foundation curriculum subjects to ensure that teachers can identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and that pupils' retention of key knowledge is secure.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114198
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346297
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	372
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sharon Lawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Beattie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.howletchlane.co.uk">www.howletchlane.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- An acting special educational needs and disabilities coordinator was appointed in September 2024.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school operates a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school has a specially resourced provision. This caters for a small number of pupils with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs.

## 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, school staff, some parents, representatives of the governing body and the local authority's leadership adviser.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and religious education. For each deep dive, the 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.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors also looked at examples of work in books from other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors visited the provision for two-year-olds plus the Nursery and Reception classes. Inspectors also visited the enhanced mainstream provision setting.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the online staff survey, including the free-text comments.

## **Inspection team**

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katie Lowe

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Piper

Ofsted Inspector

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