

Inspection of Larkspur Community Primary School

Beacon Lough East, Larkspur Primary School, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 6SS

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

At the heart of Larkspur Primary School are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know pupils and families well they focus on supporting pupils' emotional needs. Pupils are safe in school, have trusted adults and everyone is valued and included. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

The school has an ambition that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive a high-quality education. In some areas, including in the early years, these high expectations are not realised. Pupils' achievement does not match the school's intentions. There is work to do to ensure that all pupils have the breadth, and depth, of knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils rise to the high expectations that adults have for their behaviour. They move around school calmly, demonstrating 'wonderful walking' consistently. At social times, pupils play well together in the playground and treat each other with respect. Pupils behave well in classrooms and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.

The school provides a range of experiences to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy these opportunities, which include visits to local museums, farms and music venues. Pupils are especially proud to wear badges that show their leadership responsibilities. These include sports leaders, school councillors, eco champions and bookworms who look after the library.

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

The essential curriculum knowledge pupils should know and remember is now identified in most subjects. However, the quality of learning activities varies between subjects and year groups. Pupils are not able to secure curriculum knowledge sufficiently well in all subjects. This means they are not fully ready for the next stage of their education. Under the new Headteacher the school's knowledge and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses are developing.

The school has prioritised improving the delivery of the curriculum in mathematics. For example, the school has worked with specialist advisers to provide training to improve teachers' understanding of how best to deliver the mathematics curriculum in mixed age classes. This has resulted in initial improvements in pupils' knowledge and skills, including those with SEND. However, the standards achieved by some pupils remain too low over time.

Weaknesses in the writing curriculum hamper the quality of pupils' written work, especially for those pupils at an early stage of writing. These pupils are not as well prepared for the demands of the key stage 2 writing curriculum as they should be.

The school has developed a love of reading that extends from the early years to Year 6. Pupils spoke eagerly about the books that they read independently and in class. Pupils of

all ages are keen to finish their reading books and earn stamps which result in a visit to the 'Larkspur Café' for a hot chocolate reward. Pupils benefit from a well-ordered phonics programme that staff deliver well. Pupils practise their reading with books that, for the vast majority of pupils, are closely matched to the sounds that they know. Staff provide intervention to pupils who need to catch up with their peers. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of key stage 2.

The school uses systems to identify pupils with SEND. Staff support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. The Maple Classroom provides bespoke learning for a small number of pupils who need enhanced support. This is a nurturing, calm environment where pupils feel safe and access a suitable curriculum. Maple pupils also enjoy being with their peers at social times.

The school has rightly identified concerns about the quality of provision for the youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has acted quickly to improve provision, especially in the outdoor area. However, staff do not always exploit opportunities to model talk and learning for children. This means that staff do not help children to acquire some of the knowledge that they need in readiness for key stage 1. The school is aware that attendance and punctuality are ongoing issues. Recently, the school has refined systems already in place to further improve pupils' attendance and to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should or arrive on time.

Pupils follow a comprehensive personal development curriculum which prepares pupils well for life beyond the school gates. They learn about healthy relationships and have a secure understanding of aspects such as consent and privacy. Pupils learn how to maintain their physical and mental health well.

There is a strong team culture among the staff at the school. Staff feel supported with their well-being. However, governors have not challenged and held school leaders to account for the decline in the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that pupils develop the knowledge that they need to be effective writers from an early age. As a result, some pupils do not have secure foundational knowledge in writing. The school should ensure that the writing

curriculum enables pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need to become successful writers over time.

- Sometimes, learning activities in the early years and adult interactions are not matched closely to the children's learning needs. This means children are not fully engaged in their learning and do not learn as much as they could. The school should ensure that activities for talk and learning are precisely matched to the intended curriculum and that adults take all opportunities to interact with children so that children are prepared for key stage 1.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough, while others do not arrive on time at the start of the school day. This means that these pupils miss out on important learning across the curriculum. The school should continue to develop the recently implemented systems to ensure that parents understand the importance of regular pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Governors do not hold the school to account as effectively as they should. As a result, school leaders' actions have not been challenged sufficiently, resulting in a decline in the quality of education across the school. The governing body should ensure that it is equipped to provide effective challenge to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

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	108330
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10320344
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Reverend Danie Lindley
Headteacher	Katy Anglesea
Website	www.larkspurprimary.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- The school has nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school has high pupil mobility.
- The school has a free breakfast club.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

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 judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- 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.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. They also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors also discussed the writing curriculum with leaders and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. An inspector also scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they collected their children from school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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