

South Hetton Primary School

Frederick Terrace, South Hetton, Durham DH6 2TJ

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since becoming part of the Tudhoe Learning Trust in 2015, the school has gone from strength to strength.
- The support and challenge provided by the trust have proved pivotal in securing rapid improvements. Leaders now have strong capacity to improve the school still further.
- Outcomes are improving. More pupils now make a good start in early years and key stage 1, and the progress that pupils make across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is increasingly consistent.
- Teaching is good in all phases of the school. Teachers plan carefully and provide a tight structure of support which helps pupils learn well. Differences in attainment between groups of pupils are diminishing, but occasionally the most able pupils are not moved on quickly enough.
- Pupils have a consistently strong voice in the school. The work of the pupil parliament is highly influential in decision making.
- Middle leaders are highly effective. The leadership of English, mathematics and early years is strong. This is having a positive effect on pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Nevertheless, leaders are continually seeking to improve it. They recognise that pupils' subject-specific skills need to develop further.
- Governors are very well informed, and they monitor the school's work closely.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful of one another. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are confident that the school is safe. Levels of attendance are broadly average, but disadvantaged pupils are more likely to miss school regularly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the progress made in lessons, particularly for the most able, by ensuring that pupils rapidly move on to new work when they are ready.
- Continue to refine the curriculum so that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their subject-specific skills and apply their knowledge to a range of different contexts.
- Reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who regularly miss school, by increasing the range of support and challenge for individual families.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since joining the Tudhoe Learning Trust in 2015, the school has made very strong progress. Leaders have readily accepted the support of the trust, valuing opportunities to visit and learn from other schools. They have benefited from the advice of leaders within the trust and have made changes that have brought about significant improvements.
- The trust has been pivotal in developing strong leadership at all levels in the school. It has provided strategic direction, systems and policies and has also provided excellent support and training. Leaders have been given the opportunity to adapt the trust's systems and establish their own approach. They have learned much from the trust, and as a result, they are confident enough to take risks and implement new ideas to move things forward for pupils.
- Leaders evaluate the school's performance carefully. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. Where they find inconsistencies in progress, they intervene promptly, providing effective support to ensure that improvements are made. Their evaluations of performance are accurate because they work closely with colleagues in the school and within the trust. As a result, the progress made by all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have additional needs, is improving rapidly. Current pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- When making checks on standards, leaders routinely seek pupils' views. Leaders have ensured that pupils also contribute to school decisions through a pupil parliament. The parliament and its related committees play a significant role in decisions about school routines, resources and activities. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of democracy and its role in modern Britain.
- Leaders use additional funding for pupils entitled to pupil premium thoughtfully to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. This ensures that poverty does not prevent pupils from accessing residential visits and sporting events, or from being involved in school clubs. Leaders also work effectively to address the social, academic and physical needs of individual pupils. Pupils who receive this support make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well provided for because leaders make sure that additional funding for these pupils is spent appropriately. Leaders seek advice and training to help them plan effective support. They make thorough checks to ensure that the support is meeting pupils' needs, and they are quick to make changes if they find that improvements are needed. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The headteacher has considerable faith in her middle leaders and has encouraged them to take responsibility for the design and delivery of the curriculum. This faith has been repaid in full because middle leaders have risen to the challenge. They have accessed support and training from within the Tudhoe Learning Trust and further afield. This expertise has enabled them to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in reading and mathematics and in early years. They test new ideas thoroughly before

implementing them throughout the school. This ensures that staff receive clear guidance about what they have to do.

- Leaders review and adapt the curriculum regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs. They have established 'non-negotiables' for teachers to ensure that expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. Leaders have also ensured that the curriculum is broad and sequential, and is enriched by visits. Pupils are enthusiastic about topics such as 'Castles' and 'Wild Weather'. They demonstrate a good factual knowledge of such topics, but leaders acknowledge that the curriculum does not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop subject-specific skills. Work to address this is well under way.
- Supported by the trust, the headteacher has developed strong systems for holding teachers to account for their performance. Teachers' targets are closely linked to school priorities and are regularly reviewed. Staff say that they value this process because it is clear. 'It just makes sense. It's our job,' a group of teachers told inspectors.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective. They are passionate about the school and determined to maintain the pace of improvement. They take their role seriously and invest considerable time to ensure that they lead a school that enables all pupils to succeed.
- Governors know the school well. They have received support from the trust, which has enabled them to have a significant role in improving standards. Governors visit the school regularly to work with school leaders. They check standards and evaluate the impact of pupil premium and physical education and sport funding. Performance information is scrutinised thoroughly by a progress committee. Minutes of meetings demonstrate that governors use their knowledge of the school to challenge leaders and ensure that improvement continues.
- Governors make regular and robust reviews of the progress that the headteacher is making towards her annual targets. They have made significant improvements to this aspect of their role because they have a more accurate and detailed knowledge of the school. As a result, there is strong professional discussion between the headteacher and the school governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, including governors, make regular checks to ensure that systems are robust.
- Systems for recruitment have been improved through work with the trust. As a result, thorough and systematic checks are made on adults who work in, or visit, the school. A programme of training has ensured that members of staff know precisely what actions to take if they have a concern about a child's safety. Leaders keep good records of the action they take to protect pupils and ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are fit for purpose.

- Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe, inside and outside school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers, in all classes, make use of assessment information to plan learning thoroughly and carefully. As a result, pupils develop their English and mathematical skills in a sequence of logical steps that build upon their prior knowledge and understanding. In lessons, pupils know exactly what they have to do because teachers explain clearly and provide pupils with detailed information about what is expected. Pupils receive clear feedback that allows them to improve their work.
- Teachers' clarity of planning and expectations enable very effective communication between staff. This ensures that adults in classrooms know what is expected of pupils and can provide strong support to those who need it.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons because teaching is well matched to their prior knowledge. On occasion, the most able pupils grasp the learning quickly and are not moved on to further challenges quickly enough. This restricts them from making even faster progress.
- Leaders provide effective support and advice to teachers because they make regular checks on the progress of pupils and on the quality of teaching. As a result, the quality and consistency of teaching are strong and continue to improve. Teachers who are new to the profession receive additional mentoring from experienced staff, which allows them to rapidly develop their professional skills.
- All teachers have benefited from opportunities to work with colleagues from the Tudhoe Learning Trust. As a result, they have improved their subject knowledge and implemented strategies, such as the use of success criteria, as well as improving the accuracy of assessment. Teachers are very positive about the impact that the trust has had on the quality of their teaching. They acknowledge that they were heavily reliant on support when the school joined the trust, but are now confident in their capacity to adapt and refine the trust's systems to meet the needs of South Hetton pupils in what they call 'the South Hetton Way'.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Adults build children's grasp of phonics systematically in early years and there are plenty of opportunities for children to share books with adults. Younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics to decode and read new words, so that the vast majority of pupils attain the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2.
- Reading is fostered carefully in key stage 2. Teaching focuses on inference and summarising because leaders found these to be weaknesses, following analysis of pupils' work. Teachers make careful checks to ensure that pupils read suitably challenging books at home, and they plan learning around key texts that inspire pupils to read more widely. Pupils are enthusiastic about their reading, and are keen to talk about the books they read. Their understanding of texts and the fluency with which they read are improving rapidly.
- The school is working with the Great North Maths Hub to implement a more challenging mathematics curriculum. This is providing regular opportunities for pupils

to apply their knowledge of mathematics to solving problems. Consequently, pupils' skills in solving these tricky problems are beginning to improve.

- Teachers give good attention to developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. They have strong subject knowledge and teach these skills systematically. Consequently, all groups of pupils make good progress. They have regular opportunities to put these skills into practice through extended pieces of work in 'cold writes' and in 'golden books'. These pieces of work clearly demonstrate that pupils can apply their knowledge to their writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development is based on the school's core values of tolerance, independence, perseverance, respect and ambition. Understanding of these values is developed through assemblies and through the curriculum.
- Pupils live up to these values. They are kind to each other and keen to learn. There are very few incidents of bullying or derogatory language. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. The breakfast club is well attended and has a warm, family-like atmosphere which reflects the rest of the school. The vast majority of parents say that their children are happy and safe at school.
- The pupil parliament reflects the value that leaders place on the views of pupils. As a result, pupils are confident that their opinions matter and that adults will listen to what they have to say.
- The curriculum offers regular opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe indoors and outdoors. Older pupils are taught how to keep others safe through first-aid training, and all are confident about how to stay safe online and how to stay healthy. Trained staff provide highly effective support for pupils who are experiencing difficulties with mental health. Such support enables these pupils to engage positively in school activities.
- A good range of trips and residential visits contributes well to pupils' personal development and awareness of the world. Trips have been thoughtfully designed to link with curriculum topics and enrich pupils' understanding of the region's heritage. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum includes a residential visit for every year group. Pupils in Year 1 stay at Bamburgh as part of their study of castles and Grace Darling. Pupils in Year 5 visit Eden Camp and stay nearby as evacuees. These challenging visits are highly valued by pupils and parents.
- Pupils are made aware of the diversity of modern Britain through their trips and visits, and also by a programme of assemblies. Through these assemblies, pupils learn about events such as Holocaust Memorial Day and Diwali. In lessons, children in Nursery and Reception celebrate Chinese New Year, while older pupils learn about different faiths through their studies in religious education.

- Sport has a high profile at the school. Regular active participation in lessons is well supplemented by after-school sporting activities and wider competitive sports for boys and girls.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in the vast majority of lessons and when they are outside their classroom. Approaches to managing pupils' behaviour are effective, so incidents of poor behaviour are isolated to a small number of pupils.
- Incidents of poor behaviour have declined considerably since the school joined the Tudhoe Learning Trust. This is because the behaviour policy is now used consistently by all staff.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive. They take pride in their work and try hard to improve it. The majority of pupils are keen to respond and share their views when teachers ask questions.
- The overall attendance of pupils is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils missing significant amounts of their education has fallen markedly. It is now below the national average for 2017. This is because leaders are tracking absence more effectively and being more assertive with families. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who regularly miss school remains stubbornly high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress that pupils make across different year groups and subjects has improved since the school joined the Tudhoe Learning Trust in 2015. This is because leaders have improved the quality of teaching. As a result, levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils currently in the school are broadly in line with national averages and standards are rising. Current pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for secondary school.
- Leaders have established effective systems for identifying pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their work. These pupils are given good support and as a result, the majority of them are able to catch up.
- Pupils who took national curriculum tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017 made broadly average progress in writing and mathematics, reaching standards that were similar to those seen nationally. Standards in reading were lower. This was the result of weak teaching lower down the school, combined with poor systems for checking the quality of pupils' work. The actions of leaders and the trust have ensured that teaching is now considerably stronger and current pupils are making faster progress. The school's assessment information and the work in pupils' books demonstrate that standards in reading have risen considerably.
- Pupils in key stage 1 also make good progress. Teachers build upon the strong start children make in early years, so that the vast majority of pupils enter key stage 2 with the skills and knowledge they need.
- In most classes across the school and in most subjects, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of other pupils in the school. Leaders constantly seek to

improve outcomes for these pupils through careful analysis of progress and well-targeted support.

- In reading and writing, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly in line with that of other pupils in the school. Progress for pupils who have SEN and /or disabilities in mathematics has been weaker, but is improving because leaders have changed the delivery of the mathematics curriculum to include more opportunities for reasoning and problem solving.

Early years provision

Good

- Support from the Tudhoe Learning Trust has enabled the early years leader to bring about changes that have improved the quality of early years education. Expectations are high and staff are confident that the strong outcomes they are achieving will be sustained.
- The majority of children enter Nursery with skills similar to what might be expected for their age, although some children are well behind in the development of their speech and language. These children are well supported by staff and quickly start to catch up. Improvements in teaching and in the early years environment mean that all groups of children now make strong progress through Nursery and Reception Years, so that a significant proportion of pupils exceed national expectations by the time they leave the Reception class.
- The early years leader has worked with colleagues from the trust to strengthen the accuracy of assessment. This is allowing staff to quickly identify the needs of the children. The early years leader works very effectively with the SEN coordinator to ensure that appropriate support is put in place quickly. For example, children who have barriers to their development of speech and language work with specialist therapists and make strong progress.
- Improvements in assessment have also resulted in staff raising their judgements about the attainment of children on entry to the Nursery class. They now know that the majority of pupils start Nursery at standards that are broadly similar to those seen nationally. The early years leader has responded to this by planning more challenging activities and improving the subject knowledge of her staff. As a result, the proportion of children exceeding nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the Reception class is at least double the national average.
- The early years leader has improved the indoor and outdoor facilities so that children can access a wider range of activities. As a result, children benefit from a rich and varied mix of learning experiences that extend their skills and knowledge.
- In keeping with the whole-school approach to literature, many of the learning experiences in early years include stories. Learning about animals has been enhanced by the story 'Dear Zoo', which children have also seen at the theatre. Children in the Reception class make a camp in the school field and tell stories around a camp fire. Through activities such as these, leaders have ensured that children in early years gain a secure vocabulary and a love of books.
- Highly effective training has ensured that staff have a good knowledge of how to teach phonics. Children make strong progress in highly structured teaching sessions,

supported by regular opportunities to practise their skills in other activities and through sharing books with adults. On occasion, the structure of the sessions means that the most able children are not moved on to more challenging work in a timely manner.

- The early years leader has made sure that the curriculum provides children with plenty of opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain. During the inspection, children in the Reception class were inspired by a theme based on the royal wedding. They had worked together to design and build a castle for a prince and princess. Visits to places of worship and celebrations of Chinese New Year provide opportunities for children to experience diverse cultures.
- Staff in early years build strong relationships with parents and have created a safe environment for children to learn. Routines are well established and there is a strong sense of mutual respect between staff and children. As a consequence, children settle quickly into the Nursery class and develop positive attitudes throughout their time in early years. They work well together, help each other and speak confidently to adults and visitors. By the time they reach the end of their time in early years, children are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141999
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10048359

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Robert Robson
Headteacher	Lucy Griffiths
Telephone number	0191 526 1662
Website	www.southhetton.durham.sch.uk
Email address	southhetton@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy and joined the Tudhoe Learning Trust in September 2015.
- South Hetton Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils in the school are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.
- An average proportion of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also average.
- Children attend Nursery on a part-time basis.

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all phases of the school, including the Nursery and Reception classes. A number of visits to lessons were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. During observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a sample of books containing work from English and mathematics and the wider curriculum. Inspectors also listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and observed their behaviour and conduct around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and a group of teachers. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils, a group of governors, a representative of the local authority and the chief executive of the Tudhoe Learning Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information, performance management documents and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors looked at records of attendance, behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. In addition, the inspector took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

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