

Inspection of a good school: Amble Links First School

Links Avenue, Links Estate, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 0SA

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 July 2021

Outcome

Amble Links First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Amble Links First School. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They benefit from the strong relationships with staff. They know that there is always someone to ask for help if they need it. This helps them to gain confidence and understand work that they struggle with or may have missed during periods of national restrictions. Parents say the added support leaders have put in to deal with the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has worked effectively. They are overwhelmingly positive about the school and describe leaders as going 'the extra mile' to support their child.

Pupils are polite and confident. They have respect for one another in class and around school. They say that everyone treats each other fairly. They say bullying incidents are rare.

Pupils are well behaved both in and out of lessons. They want to learn and try their best. This is because leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour that everyone understands.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. This is well established in subjects such as mathematics, English, art and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils are enthusiastic to learn and often describe these as being their favourite subjects. Teachers' checks in these subjects show pupils remember and can describe what they have learned.

The art curriculum is a real success. Leaders set out the small steps that children need to learn from early years onwards. They plan opportunities for pupils to know about a variety of artists and their art forms from a wide range of backgrounds and time periods. This enables pupils to develop their artistic talents and their own style. As a result, pupils,

including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are successful and produce impressive pieces of art.

The curriculum for mathematics has been carefully planned. Children learn the expected knowledge and content right from the start. Pupils get plenty of opportunity to revisit prior learning. This gives them a solid foundation to build on, making them confident mathematicians. During periods of national restrictions, leaders have adapted the mathematics curriculum. Pupils learn the same curriculum whether they are learning at home or in school. This ensures that pupils keep up and achieve well.

Leaders are improving the curriculum in other subjects, such as geography and design and technology. Leaders noted that the pace of implementing this work has slowed due to COVID-19. They have identified what they want pupils to know, with plans in place to check what pupils remember. The determination of leaders to teach pupils about the local area is evident. Plans include pupils learning about the local area, such as the impact of the Romans on Britain, through trips to Hadrian's Wall.

There is a passion for reading throughout school. This starts in Little Pebbles, the provision for two-year-olds. Daily stories capture the imagination of children, who become captivated with books that staff read to them. Reading rewards are popular. Children's excitement to pick a prize in the 'dippy box' is infectious.

Leaders get children involved in reading activities as soon as they start Little Pebbles. From Reception onwards, the books that pupils read match the sounds that they are learning. This helps them to become fluent and confident readers by the end of Year 2. Weaker readers get lots of extra help and catch up quickly.

Children in early years get off to a good start. In Little Pebbles, routines are quickly established. This ensures a smooth transition to Nursery and beyond. The school employs a school nurse for two days a week. She checks all children's speech and language, identifying those who need immediate support. This helps children make good progress.

The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) works with staff and parents to plan detailed support for pupils with SEND. These plans set out how teachers adapt the curriculum and include any additional support that pupils may require. Leaders track how this is being implemented and track the progress that pupils make. This has led to pupils with SEND being successful in their learning.

Leaders support pupils' personal development through a well-sequenced personal, social and health education curriculum. Older pupils can discuss issues such as puberty with age-appropriate understanding and maturity. Leaders encourage pupils to follow the school's '3 R's': to be responsible, resilient and respectful people. Pupils take responsibility in school by taking on roles such as helping to put away equipment at the end of lunchtime. However, pupils do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the fundamental British values, such as democracy and tolerance. They are not able to explain why it is important to respect people's differences and the part that this plays in society.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported in managing their workload and are cared for by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate training to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff are confident about safeguarding procedures and how to record any concerns. Leaders ensure that the most vulnerable families receive the support that they need.

Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils learn how to stay safe online in computing lessons. They can apply what they have learned in real-life situations, such as telling an adult and blocking people online whom they do not know.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Ensure that pupils know and understand fundamental British values and the wider impact on society.
- Set out the knowledge in all subjects that you want pupils to know so that you can accurately check what they remember.

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 or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2016.

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 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.

If you are the school and 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 [here](#).

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	122173
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10195720
Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Linda Williams
Headteacher	Mr Paul Heeley
Website	www.amblelinks.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 April 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a part-time Nursery. The majority of children transfer to Reception at the end of their time in Nursery.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the school, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at the quality of education in early reading, mathematics, art, PSHE and history. As part of this, they spoke to leaders, pupils and staff, visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils read and visited intervention sessions.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and lunchtimes. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour and reviewed 21 pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record. They talked to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to the SENDCo and reviewed pupils' plans.
- Inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection and considered the views of 18 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. They considered 25 responses from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Jennifer Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kate Rowley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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