

Inspection of a good school: Annfield Plain Junior School

Front Street, Annfield Plain, Stanley, County Durham DH9 7ST

Inspection date: 13 October 2023

Outcome

Annfield Plain Junior School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Inez Burgess. This school is part of Stanley Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Stewart, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Harpe.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and friendly school with a true community spirit. Pupils enjoy playing and working together. They build strong relationships with each other and with staff. Staff know pupils and their families well. The school involves parents and carers in pupils' education. It works with them to help pupils achieve.

The school has high aspirations for pupils, both during their time at the school and beyond. The school instils a belief in pupils that they can succeed. Pupils respond well. They work hard in lessons and enjoy visits to places of cultural interest. They leave the school well prepared for their secondary education.

Pupils behave well. The school has established a clear set of routines for behaviour. Pupils follow these routines with consistency. As they move through the school, they take an increasing responsibility for their own behaviour. This is a calm and orderly school.

The school provides pupils with a diverse range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils take part in clubs and activities, such as art, dance, football and karate. Pupils contribute to school life. They take on roles as Rights Respecting Ambassadors, eco-warriors and playground pals.

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

The school has established a broad and balanced curriculum. It has identified the essential knowledge it wants pupils to know and remember. The curriculum is well ordered so that pupils build their knowledge in a logical and progressive manner. In subjects such as mathematics and science, pupils learn to think and work like subject specialists. They

develop the skills they need to solve problems and conduct investigations. Pupils also experience 'enjoy and achieve weeks' that enrich the curriculum. They get the opportunity to explore themes, such as climate change, in greater depth.

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school identifies pupils' needs well. It communicates effectively with pupils' infant schools. This ensures that the school is well prepared to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND complete the same work as their peers. Staff receive the training they need to help pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils read often at school. They read class texts from a diverse range of authors and they also read for pleasure. Those pupils who need extra help with their reading get it. The school provides additional support in phonics as well as reading fluency and comprehension. This support helps pupils to develop into confident and fluent readers. As pupils move through the school, they develop their reading comprehension skills further. The school also promotes pupils' love for reading. Pupils enjoy author visits, reading projects and reading competitions.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They teach in a structured way. This allows pupils to build on what they have learned before. However, sometimes teachers do not explain activities clearly or check pupils' understanding systematically. Sometimes, their questioning does not extend and deepen pupils' knowledge as well as it might.

Pupils learn without disruption. In lessons, they listen to teachers and other adults who provide extra help. They focus on their work and try their best.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about relationships and equality and diversity in an age-appropriate way. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the local community. The school organises several trips and visits, including to the Lake District, London and Edinburgh Zoo. These events enrich pupils' education. Pupils gain a well-informed understanding of life in modern Britain. The school's work in supporting pupils' personal development is both substantial and significant.

Leaders share a strong commitment to removing barriers to pupils' achievement. The trust supports the school well, including by providing professional development for staff. Trustees and governors carry out their respective responsibilities with appropriate rigour. Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders show genuine care for staff well-being and ensure that staff workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, in lessons, teachers do not explain activities clearly enough and do not check pupils' understanding systematically. Also, sometimes teachers do not use questioning effectively to deepen and extend pupils' learning. This means that some pupils do not fully understand the purpose of tasks set. They do not secure the essential knowledge that teachers want them to know and remember and/or build on that essential knowledge to deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that it provides teachers with the professional development they need to secure and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Annfield Plain Junior School, to be good in January 2020.

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	148465
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10297533
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Harpe
CEO of the trust	Mark Stewart
Headteacher	Inez Burgess
Website	www.annfieldplainjuniors.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Stanley Learning Partnership trust.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- Annfield Plain Junior School converted to become an academy school in April 2021. When its predecessor school, Annfield Plain Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the 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, the CEO of the trust, trustees and members of the local governing body.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in art and design and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sonia Fraser

Ofsted Inspector

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