

Inspection of Amble First School

Edwin Street, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 0EF

Inspection dates: 16–17 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their warm, friendly school. They get along well together. This helps to make breaktimes and lunchtimes enjoyable, social occasions. Pupils are proud to sit at the 'Golden Table' on Thursdays. This privilege is earned by being particularly kind, polite or helpful. Pupils enjoy school; their attendance has improved.

As the school motto claims, pupils 'learn to fly' here. Adults put pupils at the centre of all that they do. Cheerful, caring staff treat pupils with kindness. Pupils behave well and feel safe. They listen to each other and to adults. Bullying is rare. The values of 'respect, happiness and growth' are well established.

The headteacher makes sure that everyone feels welcome. Carefully planned teaching, as well as trips, clubs and visitors excite pupils' interests. Parents say staff are 'amazing', 'lovely', 'approachable and enthusiastic'. Parents have many opportunities to become involved in their child's learning, including during 'drop-in' days. All who responded to Ofsted's survey would recommend this school to others.

The early years is well led and managed. Consistent rules and well-practised routines help children to settle quickly. Staff aim high for what children can achieve. Children read, write and build their understanding of number from the start of Reception. They leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.

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

The headteacher wants the absolute best for all pupils. Staff's, parents' and pupils' views are important to her. She has created a school where everyone feels valued. Parents feel that communication has improved. Some describe the partnership between home and school as 'superb', 'supportive' and built on 'trust'.

Senior leaders have improved the quality of education. The curriculum holds pupils' interest. Many pupils told me they 'love' science. Year 2 pupils remembered key information about everyday materials from Year 1. They were able to use this knowledge to discuss the purpose and suitability of bandages, medical tape and plasters.

Leaders give reading full priority. High-quality staff training takes place. Reading and phonics are taught well. Staff are consistent in their approach. One phonics programme is followed faithfully. Staff choose texts and books carefully. They read aloud to pupils daily. Adults' lively expression, precise articulation and enthusiasm are catching. Pupils learn and know a set of familiar stories inside out by the end of each year.

Pupils enjoy reading. The 'swap stop' outdoors gets them talking about their favourite stories and authors. They read fluently and with good understanding,

through lots of practice. Pupils' books in school are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Leaders also support parents' understanding of early reading through phonics workshops. Adults at home and those in school pronounce similarly the sounds that letters make. Reading challenges allow parents to become partners in their child's reading journey.

The books that go home are sometimes different to those used in school. These are less well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for those in the early years and key stage 1. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have difficulty reading the texts they are given in school. Some are too reliant on adults to help them read their work.

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and remember in most subjects. The content in English, mathematics, history and science is well sequenced. Pupils' outcomes in statutory tests at the end of key stage 1 in science, reading, writing and mathematics have risen. They do as well or better than other pupils nationally.

Leaders know what still needs to be done. In some subjects, for example art and design and computing, plans lack detail. Key knowledge and content are not sequenced as well or captured as clearly as they need to be. Leaders are sorting this out.

Leaders offer staff high-quality, subject-specific training. Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They make a difference in their subjects and support other teachers to understand what needs to be taught. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have developed well. Pupils work hard and concentrate in lessons.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is effective. They explore their own locality and its past. Visits to local beaches, churches and libraries are part and parcel of the school day. Pupils learn about respect, tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. They enjoy 'parliament day' and taking on extra responsibilities as 'puffin patrollers'. Pupils discuss and debate current affairs, including the effect of plastics on our world.

The early years is well led and managed. Children in Reception are well looked after and achieve well. Children read, write and practise their number knowledge every day. Children's 'have a go' books show that their letter and number formation has developed quickly. The large majority can write their names and other words legibly already. Children behave sensibly. Staff are patient and sensitive. They meet the emotional, personal and social needs of all children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety and welfare are priorities. Strong systems lessen the risks for pupils. Staff are up-to-date with child protection guidance and advice. They know how to

spot the signs of potential harm and abuse. Adults are knowledgeable about local and wider risks, including child exploitation.

Detailed safeguarding and behaviour logs are stored by date. Adults identify and respond to concerns quickly. They work well with external agencies. Vulnerable pupils and families get the support they need.

Governors understand their responsibilities to protect pupils. They challenge and support staff well. However, governors were not aware of the findings from the most recent focused Ofsted inspection of Northumberland's services and its potential effects for Amble First School.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should make sure that all primary curriculum subjects are well planned. Plans for foundation subjects, for example computing and art and design, need greater detail. The subject-specific vocabulary, knowledge and learning that pupils are meant to acquire as they move through school should be obvious and spelled out sequentially. Leaders should set out precisely when and what pupils need to know and remember in each subject.
- The books that children and pupils take home should be well matched to their phonics knowledge. Each pupil with SEND should be given work that closely matches their reading and phonics needs so that they can access the work provided for them.
- Governors should take care to keep up to date with external information that may affect the school. They should pay close heed to Ofsted findings regarding the effectiveness of the local authority provision in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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.

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	122174
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10110577
Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel McGarvey
Headteacher	Helen Bruce
Website	www.ablefirst.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 July 2017

Information about this school

- The headteacher is new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The chair of governors is new to the post since the previous inspection.
- Several members of staff have taken or returned to the school following maternity leave, since the previous inspection.
- Year 4 were not in school during Day 2 of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We looked at reading, mathematics, science and history in detail.
- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body, a local authority representative, teachers and teaching assistants.
- Both inspectors visited each class. Some lesson visits were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- We looked at pupils' work in books and during visits to classrooms. We listened to pupils reading and observed their behaviour in classes and outside. We met

formally with groups of pupils to gather their views and spoke with pupils informally across the two days. No pupils responded to Ofsted's survey for pupils.

- We considered the views of staff through Ofsted's survey, the school's own information and in face-to-face discussions.
- We met with parents at the school gates. We also took into account the views of 29 parents who responded to Parent View and free-text.
- The school's website and documentation were examined, including curriculum planning, policies, SEND files, safeguarding information and behaviour and attendance logs.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Westley

Ofsted Inspector

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