

# Inspection of Toft Hill Primary School

Toft Hill, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 0JA

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Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Parents and carers typically praise the 'care and compassion' the school provides for their children. The school is highly valued by the local community. The warm, nurturing ethos shines through the very positive relationships that exist between the school and the families it serves.

There are high aspirations for all pupils. From the early years, pupils are encouraged to be curious learners, physically active and have positive mental health. They develop their academic and social skills well. They enthusiastically engage in the wide range of outdoor play and learning equipment during break-times. Pupils appreciate that teachers make learning fun and interesting.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. The school is a safe, calm and welcoming environment. Pupils are proud to earn 'gems' in recognition of their developing resilience, independence, empathy and responsibility. Their behaviour is exemplary. They achieve well and are very well prepared for life beyond school.

Pupils participate in a variety of school clubs and activities, including crafts, computing and sports competitions. They relish visiting a local charity project for various activities. These opportunities enrich the curriculum and inspire pupils to try something new. Pupils hold positions of responsibility. These include as members of the school council, play leaders and sports captains.

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

The school has reviewed and revised the curriculum. Curriculum content is clearly structured and logically sequenced. It is broad and ambitious. When possible, learning is tailored to the context of the school. For example, pupils learn about the history of lead mining in the local area. Educational visits linked to the curriculum help pupils to relate their learning to life in their local and wider community. Pupils build and extend their knowledge and skills in different curriculum subjects from the early years to Year 6. There are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and consolidate their learning.

The school has a well-deserved reputation for the effective and caring way it provides for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are identified and supported well. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. They are fully included in school life. Leaders seek external advice when necessary and work closely with parents to help pupils to achieve well and enjoy school.

Reading is high priority. Staff teach phonics well. Children begin phonics in the Reception Year. Pupils' progress in phonics is checked carefully. Staff provide effective extra support when needed. The joy of reading is promoted well. Leaders carefully select reading books for each class to read which celebrate diversity and link to topics of learning. Pupils are avid readers. They show genuine enthusiasm for books and authors they enjoy. They talk excitedly about how stories they read in class inspire their writing and develop their imagination. Children in the Reception class are immersed in the joy of listening to stories

and rhymes. Staff model language and explain vocabulary to broaden children's understanding and develop their communication skills.

The school utilises the support from the local authority and external expertise well. This includes with the teaching of writing and mathematics. Pupils learn to write with increasing maturity and fluency. There is a new structured approach to the teaching of mathematics, which starts in the early years. It is helping pupils to become increasingly competent mathematicians. However, on occasion, learning in different curriculum subjects is not matched precisely to pupils' ability. This means that some pupils may not make the progress in lessons that they could.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of everything the school does. There is an almost tangible determination to equip pupils well with the skills they need to succeed in life. This includes teaching pupils how to behave well. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their roles of responsibility. They rise to the high expectations for their conduct and behaviour, which is exceptional. Pupils participate in experiences that promote their appreciation of life in the wider world. They celebrate the joy of childhood through the 'Toft Hill Trail' of experiences to achieve before they go on to secondary school. They develop leadership skills through their different roles of responsibility. From the early years, there is a strong focus on equipping pupils with the right 'superpowers' to cope with the challenges they will face in life. Pupils learn about potential career choices. They develop respect for others, including for religious beliefs and different types of relationships. They learn about potential risks and how to stay safe. This includes online and from risks in the local community, such as railway and road safety. Pupils take part in a range of enrichment opportunities to support their wider learning and personal development. Year 6 pupils appreciate their outdoor adventure residential experience.

Governance of the school is strong. Governors know the school well. They ensure that all aspects of the school are focused on the best interests of pupils. Leaders are considerate of staff's welfare and workload. Staff speak highly of the 'close-knit' school community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- At times, learning is not sufficiently well matched to some pupils' needs. This means that some pupils may not make the progress in lessons that they could. The school should ensure that teachers' assessment of what pupils know and can do is used accurately and effectively, so that all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114107
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346293
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Co-chairs of governing body</b>	Amanda Majer Alison O'Sullivan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Leanne Nesbitt
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tofthill.durham.sch.uk">www.tofthill.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 February 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2021.
- Since the last inspection, several governors have left the governing body and new governors have been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school care.

## 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 provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, some subject leaders and the school business manager.
- The lead inspector met with the co-chairs of the governing body, the vice-chair and three other governors. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a school improvement adviser from Durham local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and English. For each group of subjects, the inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the school’s approach to teaching history and computing.
- 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’ interest first.
- The inspectors spoke to some parents informally at the start of the school day and met with some pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted’s surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Jessica McKay

His Majesty’s Inspector

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