



Assessment for reaccreditation

School name and postcode: Nettlesworth Primary School, DH2 3PF

Assessment date: Tuesday 11th June 2024

School Head Teacher: Donna Lee

School More Able Coordinator: Donna Lee

NACE Lead Assessor: Christabel Shepherd

School context

Nettlesworth Primary is a small, 1-form entry school situated in Nettlesworth, an ex-mining village near Durham in a semi-rural setting and in the highest 40% of most deprived wards nationally. There are currently 110 children on roll, 37.5% of whom are disadvantaged - a figure significantly above the national average and one which has increased in later years. Nearly a quarter of the school population (23%) come from single parent families. The PAN for each year group is 15, with children taught in pure year group classes for Reception and Years 3 and 4, and in mixed classes for Years 1/2 and 5/6.

The largest ethnic pupil groups are: White - British (95.8%) and Mixed - any other mixed background (3.36%). No children are EAL learners.

17% of Nettlesworth's pupils are on the SEND register, 5 of whom have a support plan; 2 have a support plan and receive additional top up funding; and 13 have an EHCP (a figure which has also increased more recently and is well above average when compared to national figures). An additional 6.3% of the school's pupils require intervention through Quality First Teaching.

Nettlesworth Primary is a Rights Respecting Gold School (Nov 2021) and is designated as an Inclusion Quality Mark Centre of Excellence.

Ofsted inspected the school in July 2023 and judged it as 'continuing to be a good school' noting that, 'Leaders set high expectations for all pupils. They want them to succeed personally, socially and academically. They do all they can to make sure this happens. Pupils value the support they receive from their teachers.'

13.5% of Nettlesworth's pupils are included on the More Able, Gifted and Talented register. These are a mix of both genders and include pupils who are also eligible for Pupil Premium. The school was reaccredited with the NACE Challenge Award in July 2021 and has continued to actively engage with and contribute to the work of NACE at a high level. This includes hosting a NACE Challenge Award School Experience in October 2023 and a visit from another local NACE school in June 2022; the Head Teacher speaking at the Government Events Most Able Conference in December 2021 on the theme of tailoring Most Able provision for neuro diverse pupils; and the Head Teacher producing a blog for NACE: '10 tips for effective use of pupil premium to support more able disadvantaged learners.'

Progress towards previously identified key action points

Reflect upon the language staff use towards more able learners as regards its impact on learners including in relation to growth mindset.

- Staff have been encouraged to regularly reflect upon the language sometimes used in lessons to praise or address more able learners, and to consider the unintended potential consequences of

this language. Staff have built upon the work the school has done on Growth Mindset, ensuring that it is the effort, resilience and outcome linked to the Learning Objective that is praised rather than the child's ability. Children are treated with respect and dignity and recognised for their worth. As a result, a nurturing environment has been promoted underpinned by an ethos of mutual respect where relationships are positive and supportive. The pupils are confident, happy and enjoy the whole school experience. Attendance levels are high, pupils want to come to school.

- During the assessment day, learners were confident in explaining how this approach impacts positively on their well-being. They demonstrated resilience and determination when difficulties arose and talked about how teachers 'praise you for taking your time. Our teachers don't want to see tick after tick, they want to see that we're having to work hard.'

Continue progress within maths by providing more extended tasks that require investigation and reflection on learning and resilience.

- Maths teaching has been further developed through a focus on each of the following areas:
 - Greater emphasis on rapid recall of number skills and associated facts – including mental maths (allowing children to approach problems with a range of strategies without being restricted by fluency in rapid recall).
 - The assessment of pupils joining a cohort. Gap analysis is used to ensure all children are secure in number.
 - Challenge to focus on solving fewer questions of a more formal style under timed sessions.
 - Children to develop mastery and greater depth skills by exploring alternative approaches and strategies with a focus on clear and coherent explanations for reasoning.
 - Greater emphasis in lessons on using jottings, diagrams and alternative written methods to solve problems such as bar modelling.
- As a result, staff are more able to support and promote effective reasoning skills for all learners. This was evidenced during the assessment day when pupils demonstrated a willingness to try a range of approaches to solve conceptually demanding problems, the ability to clearly explain their reasons for selecting/changing strategy and to describe how they solved problems. They were confident in visualising the steps required to solve reasoning questions and resilient when answering multi-step problems. This demonstrates that metacognition is well-developed across the school.
- The Numeracy Co-ordinator is part of a working group through the Maths Hub, this is focused on enhancing pupils' reasoning skills. In addition, the school is part of a Maths research project with local secondary schools to develop high quality transition approaches and consider the implementation of strategies used in primary classrooms. These activities are providing staff with access to cross-county and peer group expertise.

Use success criteria and toolkits kits to sharpen what is needed to achieve greater depth to complement verbal feedback in this area.

- Success criteria have been developed for all children. These are accessed via working walls or in pupils' books. Teachers ensure that the criteria are discussed and understood so that all learners are clear about the expectations and the steps to take in achieving excellent work.
- Learner targets have been established, taking into account prior attainment, and any aspirational national benchmarks so that progress can be monitored. The quality of pupils' work demonstrates effective targeting of support as well as progression in skills and knowledge and outcomes. Leaders are confident that Greater Depth KS2 outcomes in Maths are improving to be more in line with those for Reading and Writing

In summary, very good or better progress has been made against each of the key issues identified at the third assessment.

Summary of strengths for provision and outcomes

- Leadership, provision and the environment across the school actively demonstrate the school's aims and vision including *'providing children the opportunity to develop towards their full potential academically, emotionally and socially; Providing the highest standard of education to enable children to acquire the skills, knowledge and concepts relevant to their future;'* and *'Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated.'* There is a true 'every child matters' culture.
- School leaders are outward looking and reflective. They have created an ethos of high expectations alongside an enjoyment of learning whilst seeking out and celebrating all pupils' achievements and strengths including those of the More Able. As one pupil said, 'Our teachers want us to show them and ourselves what we can do and they keep encouraging and helping us to do this and to get better and better.'
- Provision for More Able pupils is at the heart of the school. It is very ably led by the school's dynamic, enthusiastic and inspirational Head Teacher - a driver for school improvement in its broadest sense.
- Policy documentation is robust, including the policy for inclusion, making the school's aims and provision for the More Able clear for all stakeholders. The Teaching and Learning policy, for example, makes explicit reference to the need for challenge for all pupils: *'They are appropriately challenged with learning experiences which are relevant to their lives and interests and are inspiring, motivating and engaging;'* All staff 'own' these policies.
- The commitment to identify more able learners and their needs and to address these consistently is reflected in policies such as the inclusion policy. Identification criteria is inclusive of pupils who are multi-exceptional or neuro diverse and reflects the practice observed across the school. Similarly, the school is relentless in identifying potentially More Able learners and working to encourage each child to demonstrate their ability. Staff have a deep knowledge of each child at Nettlesworth.
- A commitment to the education of the More Able and appropriate challenge for all learners is a key priority within the school's development plan.
- The school is a reflective learning community. It provides staff with a wide range of opportunities for regular pedagogical discussion and encourages involvement in action research and partnership working - such as the Maths projects described above, and the work to develop PE (is outlined in the case study) - to further raise the bar for teaching and learning. Consequently, staff demonstrate a particularly good understanding of classroom pedagogy for meeting the needs of the More Able pupil.
- The leadership of the school has invested in providing excellent resources which support high achievement, address any barriers to learning and ensure high levels of pupil well-being and ensure needs are met. These include the provision of instrumental lessons, visits from and workshops with a local artist, a sensory timetable, bespoke support from a range of external agencies and partners such as links with an Early Help Advisor and the Mental Health Support Teams, and recruitment of specialist support for pupils who are non-verbal.
- In this 'Rights Respecting School', leaders are acutely mindful of the wellbeing needs of the pupils. As one pupil said, 'The teachers are kind and care about our mental health and well-being.' Another said, 'The school encourages us to persevere but without being mean. We have the right to be happy and we are.'
- All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils develop into confident and resilient learners. Pupils around the school, in assembly and in every classroom visited were enthusiastically engaged in their learning. Opportunities to think hard, discuss, share and learn together is embedded in every lesson.
- Leaders have identified the importance of developing learner autonomy and have provided clear guidance for staff about how this can be achieved.
- The curriculum is broad, progressive, fun and ambitious for all pupils. An excellent repertoire of sporting and creative opportunities provides enriched learning, memorable moments and raised

aspirations. The strong enrichment programme ensures that pupils are exposed to the cultural capital that will support them in their next stage in life and increase social mobility. Children appreciate the range of activities and clubs provided for them such as the Aquilla, Maths Challenges, Mental Health First Aid/Well-Being, and Drama clubs.

- The curriculum offer includes personalised learning pathways such as the introduction of a Y7 curriculum for More Able learners in Y6. Staff are committed to ‘finding a way into learning’ for children, this includes visiting local businesses and universities, or providing access to a subject through a slightly different route. For example, where children have shown an interest in a career or area of learning, staff ask ‘What can we do to bring that to the children or take them to that?’. Another example is where a child who found it difficult to engage in PE was provided with a ‘hook’ into the subject through a science route.
- The school’s curriculum includes a relentless focus on raising pupils’ aspirations and putting new careers in front of them. The school engages well with external partners and stakeholders including members of Nettlesworth’s community and alumni who are keen to support with this and other areas of the curriculum through regular talks and visits into school.
- The school’s case study focused on actions taken to ensure a consistently high quality and challenging PE curriculum through pedagogy, assessment, culture, systems and policy. The PE curriculum is now flooded with experiences for the children such as work with a range of coaches so that talents can be identified, and staff have models from which to develop their own practice. As a result, children are increasingly developing competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities.
- Praise is linked to key values and skills (such as the Sainsbury’s Games Values) needed for future life and careers. The staff seek out and celebrate the achievements and strengths of all pupils, including those of the More Able. For example, slips are sent home to parents to celebrate the learning behaviour and attitudes demonstrated by their child.
- There are a wide range of pupil leadership responsibilities available including, for example, Team Captains, Rights Respecting Council members, School Council members, Team Chairs and, more recently, the introduction of Art Ambassadors. Whilst open to all pupils, these opportunities are also deliberately targeted at specific pupils to develop an ability or address an area for development in relation to an identified SEMH need or mental health issue.
- Weekly workshops for all children during assemblies include RE, Rights Respecting, Safeguarding, and British Values/Music (alternating fortnightly). These provide learners with authentic opportunities to explore ideas and issues, learn from each other, lead as ‘Chairs’ and develop as thoughtful and confident individuals.
- Transition is strong into and across the school and onto secondary education. Pupils are well-prepared for their secondary schools both emotionally and academically. Due to the work done by staff to share each child’s strengths, needs, next steps and barriers to learning, every effort is made to ensure that no child is overlooked when they start their new school.

Summary of strengths for teaching and learning

Classes for Reception, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were visit as part of the assessment process. Subjects observed included Forest School, PE, Science, Literacy, Computing, Art, MfL (French) and Maths.

- Teachers are reflective and enthusiastic. They demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. The growth mindset approach and a focus on the concept of ‘desirable difficulty’ are central to the school’s culture and classroom provision and, as a result, learners know that challenge is something to be embraced rather than fearful of. As a KS2 child said, ‘Challenge helps you to become better at something, it means you are moving up, so things aren’t all on the same level.’
- Teachers provide challenge through a range of strategies including thoughtfully considered and well-pitched scaffolding and/or extension activities which encourage pupils to think hard. Pupils said that their teachers ‘expect us to take our time to think when the work is hard.’ They also

explained that they are given opportunities to be independent with their work saying, 'Once teachers think we've got the hang of things, they encourage us to be independent and work on more complicated things for longer.' This was clearly evident during the 'intervention time' at the start of the school day where children were being encouraged to 'grapple' independently with the problems set.

- Staff provide clear explanations and routinely ask questions that are deliberately planned and targeted to promote thinking and extend understanding. For example, when faced with a conceptually demanding problem, learners were asked to consider: 'How can we derive the maths from this?' Similarly, in the Y4 Literacy and Y5/6 Computing lessons, high quality questioning encouraged deep thinking and reasoning.
- Pupils commented on how well their teachers explain things to them. 'They give us clear instructions and checklists so that we understand what we need to do.'
- Staff consistently encourage learners to make connections between ideas, previous learning and the broader curriculum using working walls as a key resource to support this. A good example of this was seen in a Y3 Science lesson where pupils were asked to link their learning back to a previous science lesson and to PE lessons in order to investigate which joints they might need for different movements.
- Good oracy is effectively modelled and high expectations of this are central to every classroom and assemblies in which the 'learning conversation' is promoted through high quality collaboration. Pupils were observed working very effectively together, including with partners and in groups, maturely discussing ideas. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to answer in full sentences and use tier 3 vocabulary appropriately.
- Nettlesworth's Forest School provision has been well crafted to provide effective personalised support for individual children. Levels of pupil engagement in these sessions are very high and provide carefully crafted routes into learning for a number of pupils who may initially struggle in the classroom.
- Assessment for learning is of a high quality. Teachers and support staff are agile in the classroom and, through good questioning and effective 'in the moment' response to misconceptions, they support pupils in improving their learning. In addition, self and peer assessment is well-developed and supported through age-appropriate success criteria. This was clearly evident in the Y1/2 PE lesson where children evaluated each other's performance and provided each other with constructive advice.
- Children's work is celebrated across the school and used to model high expectations and inspire others.
- Pupils' workbooks confirmed that there are high expectations across the school for deep thinking and accurate work.
- Behaviour for learning is excellent. In all the lessons observed, there was a buzz of activity because pupils were positively engaged with and enjoying their learning. Pupils confirmed that, 'learning is enjoyable' and that their 'teachers help them when they are stuck.' Similarly, pupils' conduct is extremely positive as they have been taught how to self-regulate effectively.

Key issues (key action points to be included on the school's Key Issues Matrix)

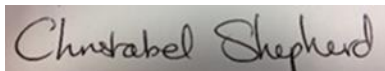
- Continue to focus on developing pupils' high level reasoning skills, particularly in Maths, leading to improved GD outcomes at the end of KS2 which are then at least maintained over time.
- Review policies such as the More Able Gifted and Talented, Teaching and Learning, and Inclusion policies to consider replacing reference to 'differentiation' with terminology such as 'adaptive' and/or 'responsive teaching', providing on-going professional development to ensure that staff understand the difference between these terms so that there is less chance of a 'lid' inadvertently being placed on a child's learning by differentiation from the start of lessons.

- Consider further developing the current system of Art Ambassadors to include the identification of Ambassadors for each subject. Within that system, create opportunities for Ambassadors to share their learning with other pupils at lunch or breaktimes through, for example, a programme of 'Mini Master' talks.
- Continue active outreach to schools in the local area and beyond to share the school's high quality More Able provision and support others in developing this.
- The Head Teacher to consider applying to become a NACE Challenge Award Assessor.

Following this successful reaccreditation, Nettlesworth Primary School is recommended for Challenge Ambassador School status.

Next reaccreditation application deadline: June 2027

NACE Lead Assessor signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chrystal Shepherd".