



# Assessment for reaccreditation

**School name and postcode**

Nettlesworth Primary School, DH2 3PF.

**Headteacher Donna Lee****School more able coordinator Donna Lee****NACE lead assessor Dr. Keith Watson****NACE support assessor N/A****School context**

Nettlesworth Primary School is a very small rural primary in County Durham that serves an area of higher-than-average deprivation. The school has rising numbers with 117 pupils from Year R to Year 6 and large class sizes. The school has 28% of pupils qualifying for pupil premium funding and the pupils are predominantly white British. The school was judged as good in all areas in the Ofsted inspection of 2018. The school holds the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Gold Award (Oct 2018) which is high profile in the school.

**Summary statement**

Nettlesworth Primary School continues to meet the criteria for a third accreditation of the NACE Challenge Award. The continued inspirational leadership of the headteacher sets the tone for the whole school community in terms of ambition for the pupils. The school has responded to the pandemic with determination and creativity and has gone 'above and beyond' in its support for the families it serves. Staff sees themselves as working at 'a working-class village school that we are all proud of'. Pupils are equally proud of their school.

Nettlesworth has developed its curriculum carefully over many years and continues to add initiatives that build upon current strengths in provision and meets the needs of the pupils. Learning is relevant and aspirational with possible career opportunities frequently suggested to pupils. This links to the ethos of high expectation and building self-esteem. Emphasis is placed upon on all pupils having talents that need to be identified, encouraged and developed.

Current in school data suggests that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. There had been a decline in attainment and progress scores in maths in 2019 but the school reflected upon this and made adjustments to improve arithmetic teaching in particular which has led to standards being higher in 2021 according the internal data.

Pupils attain well across the curriculum. The high standard of written work in French is an example of how the school is creative in its teaching, using outside expertise from a Durham University languages student to deliver weekly lessons. At Nettlesworth, barriers are something that are to be overcome. Since staff numbers are small the school makes meaningful outside links that enhance provision, such as in Physical Education which has led to the school having won the

Chester-Le-Street and Durham Partnerships Primary School of the Year for the contribution to Physical Education and sporting activity. School size is not a barrier to aspiration or provision.

### **Progress towards previous identified key action points**

The school has made good progress in relation to previous CA targets. For instance, the school rigorously monitors attainment and progress and continues to seek to increase the proportion of pupils that exceed at the end of Reception and attain greater depth at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in all subjects.

A dip in maths attainment and progress scores in 2018-19 led to outcomes being below national averages. Key Stage 2 test analysis showed three learners had scored lower than expected on the Arithmetic paper meaning they did not achieve their expected standard. In response the school prioritised rapid recall of number skills and associated facts alongside the existing emphasis on reasoning. This has led to improved outcomes in 2021 where SAT tests papers were used internally to assess pupils and suggest a return to previous standards. Attainment in reading is higher than national average at the end of key stage 2 reflecting the priority it is given.

The big write books evidence how pupils now write at greater length. This could be further improved by more detailed criteria for greater depth writing which would aid pupil attainment and self-assessment.

Verbal feedback in lessons is now more evident which allows more opportunities for pupils to self-reflect. In a Year 5/ 6 maths lesson the teacher questioned pupils throughout the lesson on their learning and encouraged reflection on both subject content and methods of learning, therefore developing meta-cognitive skills.

In lessons observed the pace of learning was appropriate and allowed pupils time to think. When interviewed, more able learners reflected that on occasion they would prefer more opportunities to start their independent work earlier in the lesson because they do not always need to hear the teacher explanation for 'things we already know and have done'. Teachers acknowledged this and accepted they could use this approach even more in the future.

Pupils speak confidently in lessons and are provided with language models by staff. Pupils listen to each other and are respectful of other speakers.

The MAGT policy has been updated but continues to be under review as provision evolves.

### **Case Study**

The case study was a welcome examination of the talents of ADHD pupils. This was rooted in the school view that *'Our inclusive ethos and belief is that every child leaves us having identified a talent, a skill, an intelligence through which they can become whatever they want to be'*. The school deploys highly effective and skilled TAs effectively for 1:1 and small-group instruction to meet specific individualised goals. A range of interventions are used that carefully match to the needs of the pupil. Examples include effective transition between nursery and school ensuring the needs of the pupils are met when starting school. This led to outstanding progress of a case study child in Reception who had displayed particular talents. Another example showcased a pupil who

has Apraxia of Speech (AOS) but through a personalised programme of learning and support is now on to track to exceed the Early Learning Goals across the entire EYFS curriculum.

The school reflected on which interventions were most successful and in what context. The key findings included how teaching successfully builds upon the interests of the pupil, the need to overcome the challenge that peer relationships can present and also the way in which teachers prepare learners for transitions into the next part of the learning day. The case study illustrates the great lengths the school goes to great lengths to know their pupils and assess their personal and learning needs. It also illustrates how they look for talents and abilities in all children, going beyond what is immediately evident in seeking to discover the uniqueness of all pupils.

#### **Summary of strengths for provision and outcomes**

- The headteacher demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment to the community she serves, building upon many years of school effectiveness. Staff continuity has ensured stability in the lives of the pupils and a level of consistency that makes the school a safe and secure place in which all pupils can learn
- The curriculum is central to the success of the provision at Nettlesworth. It provides a range of experiences and learning opportunities for pupils to pursue their learning according to their ability or interests. Individualised learning plans are provided termly for the highest achieving pupils to ensure they are being challenged and supported
- The Cornerstones curriculum provides a larger framework for the curriculum by asking 'big questions' which provide a focus for learning. This leads to more able learners deepening knowledge and applying their learning
- Standards are monitored and analysed in detail for all groups and interventions put in place. This includes for more able learners who may not have progressed so well during lockdown. In this way standards are returning toward previous levels
- The school is outward facing and always looking to create partnerships and develop initiatives such as the Weekly Forest Schools sessions and being a part of the Great North Maths Hub, which has led to professional development under the leadership of the deputy headteacher who has further developed reasoning in the school
- The school has strong provision for PE reflected in being awarded the Sainsbury's Games Gold Mark four years in a row. More able athletes compete locally and are signposted to sport clubs and organisations
- Pupils behave very well which means they can focus upon their learning. Staff skilfully manage pupils who may display challenging behaviour so that the learning of others is not affected. Respect is central to behaviour and is a strength of the school. The climate for learning is evident in all phases and the excellent pastoral care ensures all pupils are supported in whole child development

#### **Summary of strengths for teaching and learning**

- Good teacher subject knowledge underpins effective and inclusive teaching. For instance, in a Year 3/ 4 science lesson the teacher clearly explained the three states of matter using precise scientific language which she then encouraged the pupils to use. This led to pupils understanding the concept and being able to relate them to real-life examples
- Previous learning is revisited in lessons to ensure knowledge is secure. Partner talk in Year 1/ 2 was used to recall the main facts about the 'Great Fire of London' meaning pupils

could then apply this knowledge when considering how reliable types of historical evidence were

- A high profile is given to 'research questions' for more able learners to answer. This usually involves investigating an area of interest in greater depth such as a Year 4 pupil who was investigating hexafluoride
- Teachers think hard about the lessons they teach with the focus on meeting the needs of the children. They are keen to further improve their teaching and the school has long benefited from the mentoring provided to new teachers
- Teachers are increasingly borrowing from cognitive science in their teaching including the use of spaced rather than blocked practice and ensuring retrieval practice is frequent to ensure knowledge is retained. This learning is then applied across the curriculum
- Teachers provide significant time and attention for more able learners in lessons. They challenge pupils through questioning and encourage pupils to 'find out more'. Pupils are therefore curious to learn more
- Pupils are proud of their school. They identify the school strengths as being, 'Community, teamwork and education'. More able learners are respectful of all learners. On pupils said, 'Everyone gets differentiated work with a challenge that they can achieve but at their level'

### **General areas for development**

Staff care deeply for their pupils and seek to give praise regularly. The school would benefit from reflecting upon the language sometimes used, especially for more able learners. Words such as 'brainbox, masterminds and clever girl' are used in lessons which may sometimes have unintended consequences. The culture of the school is not to label pupils but words such as 'clever' need to be reflected upon. Does it mean innate ability or did the pupil work hard to achieve something? Consideration should be given to how a child who is called brainbox feels when they 'fail'. This can build upon the work the school has done on Growth Mindset.

The increased focus on arithmetic skills and continued development of reasoning skills puts the school in a positive position in maths. To develop this further teachers could provide more extended tasks across the school for more able learners that require investigation and reflection on learning and would also develop greater resilience.

Pupils now write at greater length. While learning objectives are clear and teachers share criteria for effective writing in the classroom pupils may benefit from more precise criteria to achieve greater depth. A toolkit approach would ensure pupils were clear on all aspects of effective writing that they need to include in their work and would be able to use this criteria to help self and peer assessment.

One area for consideration is the learning environment. Each classroom has a range of displays that sometimes celebrate learning and at times supports learning. This has led to 'busy' displays where key learning is not always clear. A pupil looking at some displays could experience cognitive overload with so much information to process.

**Key issues**

Key action points: *to be included on the school's Key issues matrix*

1. Reflect upon the language staff use towards more able learners as regards its impact on learners including in relation to growth mindset.
2. Continue progress within maths by providing more extended tasks that require investigation and reflection on learning and resilience.
3. Use success criteria and toolkits kits to sharpen what is needed to achieve greater depth to complement verbal feedback in this area.

**Date of Challenge Award reaccreditation**

29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**NACE lead assessor signature**

*Dr. Keith Watson*

**Date Challenge check-in due**

*(+ 18 months)*

December 2022

**Deadline for next reaccreditation**

*(+ 3 years)*

June 2024