

Inspection of a good school: Humshaugh Church of England First School

Humshaugh, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 4AA

Inspection date:

21 May 2024

Outcome

Humshaugh Church of England First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's ethos is firmly rooted in the parable of the 'Sower'. Pupils thrive among the high levels of care, encouragement and support they receive. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are fully involved in the life of the school.

High expectations are set for all pupils. The school wants them to be academically successful but places equal importance on nurturing kind and caring individuals. Pupils do not disappoint.

Pupils behave well. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils know what is expected of them. Lessons are rarely disturbed by inappropriate behaviour.

Playtimes are busy occasions. There is plenty to do and lots of friends to play with. Attendance is high.

Older pupils embrace their roles in school. Playground leaders are particularly busy organising games for all to enjoy. The school librarians are keen advocates of reading.

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

This school is highly reflective. It knows what it does well and what it needs to improve. It keeps the curriculum under constant review, mindful of pupils' changing needs and interests. The school readily uses the support and guidance of the local authority, diocese, and local schools' partnership to help it with its improvement priorities. This is beneficial in supporting the workload of staff in this small school.

Teachers are highly creative. They work hard to make their lessons interesting and engaging for pupils. They model new ideas effectively to help pupils understand. Pupils make good progress. They acquire secure knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects.

The school prioritises reading and sees it as the gateway to future success. As a result, it is given the utmost importance right from the start. Staff do all they can to nurture a lifelong love of reading in all their pupils.

In the early years, children get off to a great start. They quickly acquire a secure knowledge of the sounds that letters represent. This continues into Year 1, where the vast majority of pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check. A host of reading volunteers are on hand. They are used effectively to support pupils to become fluent and confident readers. The school prioritises this support for pupils who are heard to read less regularly at home.

Wider reading approaches have recently been introduced. Pupils study a wide range of quality texts that are suitably challenging and diverse. They cover all reading domains. Pupils are enjoying this new approach and are noticing the difference.

Lessons in art are planned to offer pupils rich learning experiences that ignite their creativity. For example, in the early years, children were painting in the style of Picasso. Children could talk confidently about the colours they were mixing. They had a secure knowledge of the artist and an understanding of cubism. Older pupils were equally immersed in creating intricate willow structures and enjoying what they were doing. However, they were less confident in explaining their learning about sculpture. This is because more-formal checks on how well pupils are securing their knowledge are not yet fully embedded.

In mathematics, pupils are acquiring security in their mathematical calculations. Typically, lessons start with a retrieval task. This is helping pupils to remember more of what they have learned. Aspects of pupils' wider mathematical understanding, such as reasoning and problem-solving, are more variable. For example, pupils receive regular opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem-solving activities. However, opportunities for pupils to reason about their mathematics are much less frequent. This means that some pupils lack confidence in making connections in their learning and explaining their mathematical thinking.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. A raft of extra-curricular activities enhances the core curriculum offer. Intergenerational coffee mornings are celebrated. This gives pupils a sense of belonging and a secure understanding of the rich heritage of the locality in which they live. It is balanced effectively by the work of the 'diversity committee' members, who promote pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.

Governors are highly skilled and dedicated. They know the school well and are passionate about securing its continued success. They consider staff's workload and well-being, when making changes. Staff feel valued as a result.

Parents and guardians are equally supportive of the school. They value the support and guidance provided to themselves and their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in some subjects is not well established. This means that sometimes the school does not have a precise understanding of what pupils know and can do in some subjects. The school needs to embed an effective assessment system so that it has a more accurate view of what pupils have learned and make the necessary curriculum adaptations to build on this.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge by completing reasoning activities are variable. This means that pupils do not deepen their understanding or extend their mathematical thinking as well as leaders expect. The school needs to strengthen this aspect of the mathematics curriculum so that more pupils can make connections in their mathematical learning and deepen their understanding.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2015.

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	122295
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10313250
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Herbie Newell
Headteacher	Jude Long
Website	www.humshaugh.northumberland.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers breakfast club provision each morning and after-school clubs from Monday to Thursday.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school is small. It is organised into three classes, with mixed-age groups in each class. Classes are organised into early years, key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.

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.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair, senior leaders, and a range of staff.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and considered pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Birch

Ofsted Inspector

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