

Inspection of a good school: Wark Church of England Primary School

Wark, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 3LS

Inspection date:

9 March 2023

Outcome

Wark Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wark Church of England Primary School is a warm and welcoming school where each pupil is valued. Leaders, staff and governors model the Christian ethos of the school which is part of everyday life. Pupils are proud to attend. They are eager to share their interests and successes.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils in school. They want pupils to fulfil their potential. Leaders' development of the curriculum is helping pupils to build their knowledge more effectively.

Pupils enjoy school life. They thrive in the positive relationships they have with all staff and their peers. Behaviour is friendly and focused when pupils are learning. Pupils say bullying is extremely rare. They know that if it did happen the adults in school would take swift action to resolve it. Pupils feel safe here in school. They value each other and celebrate the differences that they may have in a respectful way.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the leaders and staff at school. They value the learning and opportunities on offer. 'A really supportive school that treats the children as individuals and tries to get the best out of them,' captured how many parents feel about the school.

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

Leaders and staff are proud of the curriculum they are developing here. It is ambitious. Leaders know it is a work in progress. They reflect on how to make changes so that pupils achieve highly. Pupils benefit from leaders who have thought carefully about opportunities to deepen learning in this small school.

In reading, children learn the foundations of early reading in nursery. Children learn about rhythm and rhyme alongside story telling. They move to more formal phonics teaching, as they start reception, where they have daily lessons. Pupils are building early phonic knowledge well. Pupils listen to daily story time with enthusiasm. Older pupils have a wide

range of reading opportunities. Pupils in key stage 2 are clear about the stories and authors that they enjoy. Pupils enjoy the rewards they can gain for reading regularly. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading need books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. As a result, pupils are not building confidence and fluency as rapidly as they could.

Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. Teachers, with the support of knowledgeable leaders, plan and teach well sequenced lessons. The teaching sequence helps pupils revisit prior learning. Pupils are building strong mathematical knowledge over time. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to problem solve and reason. Pupils talk confidently about their knowledge. Leaders in other subjects, like Geography, are passionate about their subjects. Leaders have made it clear what they want pupils to know and remember in each subject. Pupils are beginning to build more deeper and connected knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support. Leaders and teachers provide resources to support pupils with SEND with their learning. They take part in all aspects of the curriculum alongside their peers. Leaders have the same high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, they work hard. There is very little disruption to teaching. If pupils need support to refocus, they get it quickly. Pupils across school play together well at break and lunchtime. The positive relationships between pupils and staff mean that the school is like a big family. Leaders are proud of this culture.

Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities beyond the classroom. This includes children in early years. Leaders make use of opportunities such as work with the British Ecological Society to broaden pupils' understanding of the natural world. Pupils have a range of leadership roles, including being buddies to the youngest pupils in school. Pupils, with staff, grow their own produce and use this locally to raise funds or donate to local worthy causes. Pupils know about life in modern Britain. They are clear about why racism is wrong and how everyone is equal. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is clearly planned. Leaders think carefully about how to sequence this learning. This helps pupils prepare for their next steps in learning and life.

The well-being of the school community is a high priority for leaders and governors. Staff reflect this too. Staff morale is high. Staff talk positively about the support they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) ensures that staff receive regular safeguarding training. The DSL and staff know about local issues relating to safeguarding. They are vigilant to signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Stakeholders, such as governors, are thorough in ensuring safeguarding procedures are robust. Governors take action on this where needed. The DSL keeps safeguarding records and works with other agencies where needed. Leaders make checks to ensure adults who work with children are suitable.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They know how to keep safe in the community and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils at the earliest stages of reading do not always have books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. Older pupils at the earliest stages of reading do not get enough opportunities to practise their phonic knowledge. Pupils are not building confidence, fluency and automaticity with the phonic sounds that they know when practising reading. Leaders must ensure that books are well matched to the phonic sounds that pupils have been taught.

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 June 2013.

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](#)' 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	122300
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10241936
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Esther Brown
Headteacher	Michael Boucetla
Website	www.warkprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery provision for three-year-old children.
- This is a Church of England school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2016. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of that date.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers and teaching assistants. They spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils at the early stages of reading with a familiar adult.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, pupils and a range of stakeholders including governors. Safeguarding documentation was scrutinised, including the safeguarding policies, and the single central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. Inspectors also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors gathered views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils’ views were considered through a pupil survey and through pupil meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the governing body, the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in classes, at breakfast club and during breaks and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor

His Majesty’s Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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