

Inspection of Chester-Le-Street Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Hilda Park, Chester le Street, County Durham DH2 2JT

Inspection dates: 14–15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and friendly school. Staff and pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. The headteacher, governors and staff want the very best for pupils. Teachers plan carefully what they want pupils to know. This is helping pupils to learn well and understand more. Leaders see the teaching of reading as key to learning. Good teaching of phonics and reading begins as soon as children start school. Older pupils can explain why they enjoy reading and describe their favourite books. Some pupils would benefit from reading more regularly in school and at home.

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils are excited that after-school clubs are starting again. They love caring for the school's hens and selling the eggs. The school does not tolerate bullying. Staff provide well-considered support for pupils with any concerns or anxieties. Pupils know the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. They are keen to be in school and they enjoy their lessons. Leaders and staff communicate with parents and carers in lots of ways. Some parents would like even more information. Leaders are aware of this. They have plans to provide more opportunities for parents to come into school.

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

Leaders have put in place a suitable curriculum from Reception to Year 6. Teachers are adept at engaging pupils in lessons. They plan sequences of lessons that help all pupils to learn well. Teachers' assessments identify whether pupils are remembering key knowledge. This planning and assessment are still relatively new in some subjects. There is still evidence of gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, in science and computing, some pupils have missed learning from previous years. Leaders and staff are swiftly addressing these areas.

Leaders and staff prioritise reading. Children are taught phonics and early reading from the Reception class. Training has ensured that staff have strong expertise to teach phonics. Leaders have improved the quality of books in school. Staff carefully match the books that younger pupils read to their phonics knowledge. Older pupils have access to a wide range of books, which encourages their love of reading. Story time is a regular feature at the end of the day. Leaders plan that pupils will read often. However, some pupils who are at an early stage of reading do not read regularly enough in school or at home.

Leaders and staff set high expectations for behaviour. Pupils fully understand these. Children in Reception quickly learn the school's routines and how to behave well. Pupils are attentive to teachers and staff in lessons. There is a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere throughout the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are fun, friendly and active.

The school teaches pupils how to stay healthy. Pupils learn how to grow food and how to cook. Provision such as the fun and fitness summer camp aims to get pupils active. Playtime and lunchtime activities encourage pupils to cooperate and develop

active lifestyles. There is extra support to nurture pupils' social and emotional needs where required. The 'family champion' provides support for pupils and their families. The school furthers pupils' understanding of major world faiths. The school introduces pupils to the principles of democracy. Pupils select their representatives for the pupil leadership team. Pupils consider how to help others. For example, on 'Wear a hat day', they raised funds for a charity close to their hearts.

Leaders and staff promptly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are ambitious that these pupils achieve well. The school has adapted the curriculum and teaching to help these pupils thrive. Extra adult support is well targeted. Some parents of pupils with SEND expressed concerns that their child does not receive the support they need to succeed. Leaders are reviewing how to address their concerns.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. Along with the deputy headteacher, she has quickly brought improvements in the school. The school is a happy, safe and positive place to learn. A well-structured curriculum is in place. Staff receive effective training to teach well. Staff morale is high. They believe that leaders consider their well-being as the school continues to develop. Governors keep an 'eagle eye' on every aspect of the school to ensure that pupils get the best possible deal. Several subject leaders are new to leading their curriculum area. They are keen to see further improvements in their subjects. Their checking of the impact of the curriculum is at an early stage of development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors view safeguarding to be of paramount importance. Safeguarding training ensures that leaders and staff have expertise to identify pupils who are at risk. Everyone is vigilant to pupils' needs. Staff follow up on risks to pupils promptly. Recording about safeguarding is meticulous. Leaders work in a diligent fashion with other agencies to secure support for pupils and families where necessary. The school's curriculum helps pupils know about risk and how to stay safe. Leaders have taken account of national research findings about online sexual abuse. They have revised the curriculum to place a greater focus on online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's well-sequenced planning in all subjects has not yet had a full academic year of implementation. Consequently, pupils have gaps in learning in some subjects, such as science and computing. Leaders need to ensure the continued implementation of the recently introduced curriculum planning. Teachers need to quickly address identified gaps in pupils' learning.

- There are several subject leaders who are new to their role. They have just begun to check how effectively the revised curriculum is helping pupils learn. Subject leaders need the training and opportunities to check and evaluate the impact of the curriculum.
- Some pupils are not reading regularly enough, both in school and at home. These pupils are not practising their use of phonics knowledge and early reading skills sufficiently. Leaders should ensure that staff listen to these pupils in line with the school's expectations. The school should support parents with how to help their children with reading at home.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	114213
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10200655
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bridget Watt
Headteacher	Rachel Butler
Website	www.chester-le-street.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and several teachers are new to the school since the last inspection.
- In the period since the last inspection, there has been an interim executive board (IEB) with responsibility for governance. Since January 2021, a governing body has been reinstated. The current chair of the governing body was chair of the previous IEB.
- The school is a Church of England voluntary-controlled school. The last section 48 inspection was on 8 July 2016. The next inspection should take place within the prescribed period. Section 48 inspections (or the equivalent inspection of an academy) are usually carried out every three to five years (and usually within two to three years of a new voluntary-aided school or academy or free school opening). Section 48 inspections have been suspended during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, and will restart in September 2021. The first inspection will be within eight years of the last, rather than the usual three to five years.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the key stage 1 leader and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also conducted a telephone call with the diocesan representative, and met a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors inspected safeguarding through discussions with a wide range of leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation alongside school leaders and the family champion. Inspectors met with pupils, staff and leaders to discuss the school's provision to support pupils' personal development.
- The lead inspector analysed the responses to the pupil, parent and staff surveys. Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day to consider their views. The lead inspector met with early career teachers and their mentors.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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