

Inspection of Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England Primary School

Embleton, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3XR

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy, friendly school with strong Christian values. They work hard, behave well and treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils say that there is no bullying. There is a supportive atmosphere in which pupils are encouraged to 'have a go'. Children thrive in the early years. They build on this strong start in key stages 1 and 2 to reach high standards in English and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects. However, their understanding of concepts in subjects like geography and art is sometimes limited. This is because these subjects are still in development. Teachers know pupils very well. They are quick to identify any pupil who needs extra help. These pupils get the support they need to become confident learners. Most parents agree. One parent told us, 'The way my children talk about their teachers and school and what I see on a daily basis [are] heart-warming.'

Pupils attend a range of after-school clubs, from football to mindfulness. They take part in sporting competitions and they visit places of interest linked to their learning. A feature of the school is that once a week all lessons take place on the nearby beach. The pupils and parents we spoke with were unanimous in their enthusiasm for 'beach school'. They value the positive impact that it has on learning and well-being. 'Too many people stay inside nowadays, but we don't,' one pupil told us.

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

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has developed a strong staff team and has set out a clear vision for improvement. Working together, staff and governors have transformed the school.

An 'Embleton expects' charter has raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. The headteacher has reorganised staffing so that pupils in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 learn in separate classes. This has enabled teachers to plan lesson content and support pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well in small, focused groups.

The headteacher is leading the development of the curriculum. She has used advice from the local authority and the diocese to good effect. She has also supported and encouraged teachers to develop their subject expertise. As a result, standards have risen.

Children begin learning letter sounds as soon as they are ready, which is often in the Nursery class. They build their knowledge of phonics in the Reception class. Children read books that match the sounds they know. They develop an early love of reading because they hear lots of stories and poems. Children use their knowledge of

phonics to spell words and write sentences. Teachers in key stage 1 use the same approach to teaching phonics, so pupils continue to build and revisit their knowledge. Phonics teaching groups are very small and led by trained staff. This means that pupils learn new sounds when they are ready and receive extra help if they need it. By the time they reach Year 3, almost all pupils are fluent readers.

There are clear, progressive plans in place for mathematics. Teachers know exactly what they have to teach, and when to teach it. They provide regular opportunities to revisit prior learning. Pupils pick up new learning because it is introduced carefully. Leaders have ensured that teachers have strong subject knowledge. As a result, teachers encourage pupils to solve problems and explain their reasoning. This improves pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. They often exceed the standards expected for their age. Several pupils told us that mathematics is their favourite subject.

The headteacher and her staff are developing the curriculum one subject at a time. They have identified important learning in subjects such as science and history. Pupils get lots of opportunities to apply their knowledge to different situations. Younger pupils talked to us about London at the time of the plague and the Great Fire. They linked this to their understanding of hygiene and fundraising for toilets in rural Africa. Older pupils told how moving objects over the sand at the beach school had helped them to understand their lessons about friction.

There are some gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some pupils are unsure about the chronology of the events they have studied in history. In other subjects such as art, learning is not connected as well as it is in science. Pupils enjoy their lessons but do not reach such high standards.

The early years class is a strength of the school. Children get off to a great start. They enjoy their learning because the curriculum reflects their interests. All children learn quickly through a mixture of direct teaching and play. Adults encourage children to explore new ideas and challenges. Children make sense of what they have learned through lots of imaginative activities. This is especially the case at the beach school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have strong procedures and checks in place for all adults in school. Staff know pupils very well. They are well trained and know what to do if they have any concerns.

The curriculum includes regular opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe, including online. Pupils learn about mental health, and staff have received training to work with pupils who experience difficulties.

Governors give safeguarding a high priority. They make regular checks on the school's systems to ensure that all pupils are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' memory of important content in subjects like art and geography is not as strong as it is in subjects like mathematics and science. Inspection evidence demonstrates that this is because some subject plans are less detailed and sequential than others. Consequently, leaders should continue to review subject plans so that, in all subjects, teachers understand the key content that they need to teach and when they need to teach it.
- Some pupils do not remember the chronology of different events in history, despite this being key content in the subject plan. This aspect of the plan has not been followed with enough rigour. Leaders should sharpen the checks they make on pupils' learning, to include the sequencing of learning and what pupils know and can remember. This will ensure that all teachers receive the support they need to teach important themes and concepts.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	122290
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10121700
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	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sir Alan Craft
Headteacher	Nicola Threlfall
Website	www.embletonprimaryschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils at the school is much smaller than the national average. Pupils are taught in three classes: early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- A large proportion of pupils joined the school either in key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- The headteacher and many of the governors had been recently appointed at the time of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met the headteacher and teaching staff. We met with representatives from the governing body. We also spoke with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.

- We focused on the quality of the curriculum in reading, mathematics, science and history. We spoke with the leaders for these subjects, visited lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning, looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with teachers.
- We looked at information about school clubs, the beach school and wider enrichment events. We also looked at information about behaviour and attendance.
- We looked at pupils' punctuality and behaviour across the school day. The team held discussions with groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. We listened to pupils read and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. We also spoke with different members of staff to gauge their views about the school.
- We looked at the provision for pupils with additional needs. We visited the school's wrap-around care. We visited events through the school day, such as worship and story time.
- We looked at the checks leaders make on adults who work in the school. We also talked to the headteacher and to other members of staff about safeguarding arrangements. We looked at records of the actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. The team spoke to pupils to check how safe they feel. We also checked whether members of staff understand and abide by the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Ian Dawson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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