

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

Barnsley Road, Wath-upon-Dearne, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 6PY

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The school motto of 'aim higher, shine brighter' is more than just words on a uniform. It has been used to create a caring and nurturing environment that flows through school. Parents and carers rightly praise this as a real school strength. This forms the bedrock for pupils feeling safe, happy and cared for in school.

Over recent years, the school has doubled in size. However, leaders have made sure that they make pupils feel special and known. The headteacher can be seen saying hello to each pupil by name. The school has lost none of its 'small-school community' feel as it has grown.

Teachers have high expectations for all pupils, regardless of pupils' ability. There are wonderful displays of writing around many corridors and classroom walls. These show the many improvements pupils have made since starting school.

Leaders know their school well. They are ambitious and want their good school to become even better. They are aware of the need to improve the attendance of some groups of pupils. They also recognise that the outdoor areas in Reception (Foundation 2) need further work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise different types of writing, for example in history and geography.

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

Reading is a real strength of the school. Leaders give it the highest priority. They realise that it is the key to unlocking the rest of the curriculum. Teachers and other staff deliver phonics well from the start of Reception (Foundation 2).

There is a good match of reading books to the sounds that pupils are learning. This helps pupils build their confidence and feel success daily. Teachers help pupils break

down tricky words in imaginative and fun ways. Pupils have fun feeding 'Metal Mike' tricky words and using robotic hand gestures as they sound out new words.

Teachers have a genuine passion for reading. This rubs off on pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils adore listening and taking part in guided reading sessions. The sighs of pupils' disappointment when these lessons end are audible in many classrooms.

Leaders have designed a curriculum so that all pupils learn and remember more over time, including SEND pupils. Teachers use an effective range of ways to check that pupils understand. Teachers are quick in spotting pupils' mistakes and tackle these during the lesson.

Children get off to a great start in Nursery (Foundation 1) and Reception (Foundation 2). There is a nurturing and encouraging climate for learning. This means that children develop in leaps and bounds. The indoor spaces are attractive and well laid out and engage children in playing nicely either by themselves or with others. The outdoor area has undergone some improvements over the last few years. However, it remains a work in progress. There are not enough outdoor opportunities for children to engage with letters, mark making or numbers.

The wider curriculum provides pupils with some opportunities to develop their writing. However, pupils do not engage regularly enough in thinking about how historians and geographers might explain the world in their writing. This means that they do not get to practise regularly a wider range of writing styles across different subjects.

Pupils behave well in and around school. Cleaners and other staff confirm that pupils are polite and friendly. Playground ambassadors and the Butterfly Room are successful ways in which pupils can get help if they feel lonely or sad or want to let off steam. Parents and pupils rightly feel that bullying is not tolerated and is dealt with quickly.

There are a range of clubs and activities in school. These include football, robotics, sewing and breaktime clubs. However, leaders do not look carefully enough at whether these clubs are appealing, especially to potentially vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Most pupils attend school regularly and achieve well. However, there are some groups, including some disadvantaged pupils and groups of boys, who do not attend as well. This means that they are missing out on important learning.

Leaders have engaged well with staff to manage their workloads. Leaders regularly use staff surveys. This has helped streamline teacher planning and has reduced the amount of time spent inputting data each year. Consequently, staff feel valued and trusted.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is seen as being everyone's business. Staff log any concerns they have no matter how small they may appear to be. Leaders realise that recording any concern may be helpful in building a better picture about the safety of their pupils.

Staff benefit from the regular training and weekly updates. This has helped them be more aware of issues related to county lines, extremism and female genital mutilation.

Leaders take a 'belt and braces' approach to safeguarding. They make regular checks to ensure that staff who have missed training have caught up.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum. This means that they do not get enough time tackling subject-specific styles of writing, for example in history and geography. Leaders need to ensure that pupils get the chance to practise and improve their subject-specific writing across the wider curriculum.
- The outdoor provision for children in Nursery (Foundation 1) and Reception (Foundation 2) remains a work in progress. There are not enough daily outdoor opportunities for children to practise their letters, numbers and mark making. Leaders need to ensure that they improve the outdoor provision so that children engage with letters, numbers and mark making more often.
- The school provides a range of clubs during and after school. However, leaders are not clear enough about whether this is appealing to potentially vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders need to ensure that they carry out these checks, discuss with pupils what clubs they would like, and aim to improve the range of clubs accordingly.
- Some groups of pupils are regularly absent from school. These include disadvantaged pupils and some groups of boys. This is having a negative impact on their achievement. Leaders need to continue to develop a range of strategies to improve the attendance rates of these groups of pupils so that they are at least in line with the national average for all pupils.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good, or standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Wath Church of England (Aided) Primary School, to be good in February 2012.

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	143480
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10121760
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	393
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Andrew Grantham
Headteacher	Paul Beevor
Website	www.wathcofe.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became part of the James Montgomery Academy Trust in March 2017.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a group of assistant headteachers. I also met with the chief executive officer for the trust and a group of governors. I spoke to parents informally at the end of the school day.
- I considered reading, mathematics and computing as part of this inspection. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work (including their topic books), and spoke with teachers. I spoke with pupils in lessons and met with groups of pupils. I listened to pupils read.
- I looked at a range of documentation provided by the school, including information about pupils' attendance and behaviour. I sampled some vulnerable pupils' case files. I also considered 146 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and considered 32 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Phil Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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