

Inspection of a good school: Higham St John's Church of England Primary School

Higham Hall Road, Higham, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 9EU

Inspection date: 15 September 2021

Outcome

Higham St John's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this friendly and welcoming school. They describe their teachers as kind, helpful and fun. Warm relationships between staff and pupils are firmly rooted in the school's caring Christian ethos. All are treated with kindness and respect. Adults ensure that this is a happy and safe place for pupils.

Pupils love spending time in the beautiful school grounds. They grow a range of vegetables and flowers as part of their curriculum. Pupils keep active through a range of outdoor sports and activities at lunchtimes. They enjoy the calm, quiet space in the school's outdoor reflection area.

The curriculum is engaging and ambitious. Leaders are determined that all pupils will succeed. Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Staff listen to pupils' ideas about future careers. Through dreams and aspirations days, pupils enjoy taking part in diverse activities such as self-defence, calligraphy and interior design.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, they are attentive and listen carefully to adults. Any minor incidents of misbehaviour are quickly addressed by staff. Should any bullying occur, pupils are confident that adults will take appropriate action.

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

Leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum is carefully balanced and firmly rooted in the national curriculum. Staff have benefited from training to improve their expertise in leading and teaching the curriculum. Pupils leave the school with a wide range of knowledge across a range of subjects. Staff make thoughtful and wide-ranging adaptations to ensure that all pupils with SEND have access to the same curriculum as other pupils.

Across subjects, leaders have identified the most important knowledge that they intend pupils to learn and remember. Staff have given careful thought to the order that pupils learn this important knowledge. This ensures that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. In some subjects, subject leaders' consideration about the ordering of the curriculum starts at Year 1. This is because not all subject leaders have secure knowledge about precisely how learning in the Reception Year lays important foundations for future learning.

Regular checks are made by teachers to see how well pupils are learning. These checks are detailed in subjects including mathematics, English and science. Teachers use this information to support pupils in their learning. In some other subjects, checks are not precisely matched to the school's curriculum plans. This means that in these subjects, teachers do not know in detail which parts of the important curriculum knowledge pupils are remembering.

Leaders work closely and regularly with professionals such as the school's educational psychologist. They share information about pupils with SEND. This helps to ensure that pupils' additional needs are quickly and accurately identified.

Pupils value the many opportunities they are given to read for pleasure. Older pupils were enthusiastic in describing the varied and interesting books that they enjoy reading in school. Staff have benefited from effective training in teaching phonics. They teach phonics in a well-ordered way. Pupils use their phonics knowledge successfully when reading unfamiliar words. Leaders have invested in a wide range of new books which staff carefully match to pupils' reading ability. This means that pupils can practise and develop their reading. A small number of younger pupils struggle to read fluently. Leaders have put plans in place to give these pupils additional reading practice in school.

Pupils are keen to learn. In lessons, they concentrate well and do not give up when work is tricky. Children in the early years learn new routines quickly and settle happily into school life. They play together cooperatively and move around the classroom calmly and sensibly. Pupils and adults understand and follow the school's effective behaviour policy. Teachers make sure that learning time is rarely lost due to misbehaviour. Leaders ensure that, when needed, pupils receive additional professional support for any behavioural and emotional needs.

Leaders give pupils many useful opportunities to learn about the wider world. This helps pupils appreciate and value differences and learn that all are equal. Pupils are fully involved in a wide range of charitable fundraising. Leaders encourage pupils to be caring, thoughtful and confident individuals. Through close links with the parish, leaders develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Pupils are regular visitors to the parish church, taking part in prayer services and community events.

Governors have enhanced their skills and knowledge through a wide range of helpful training. This has ensured that all governors, including those who are new to their roles, have a firm understanding of how to challenge and support leaders. Governors keep a careful check on how leaders are meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Subject leaders appreciate the time that leaders give them to lead and manage their areas of responsibility.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training. This ensures that they identify possible signs of abuse and report their concerns quickly. Safeguarding leaders follow the latest government guidance when recruiting staff or dealing with any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders work closely with external agencies to protect pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need. For example, pupils have access to professional counselling.

Through the curriculum, pupils find out about situations which may lead to harm. Pupils know that they should speak to a trusted adult if the actions of others make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders have a secure understanding of the steps in learning that children should make in the Reception class, in order to build firm foundations for future learning. Leaders need to ensure that subject leaders strengthen their understanding of these steps in learning. Subject leaders should use this information to ensure that, in all subjects, pupils build their learning in a logical way, starting from the early years.
- In some subjects, assessment systems to check how well pupils are learning are being developed and improved. At present, not all subject leaders have precise knowledge of how well pupils are knowing and remembering the taught curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the improvements of the checks take place and are used to identify any help that pupils need with their learning.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 22 to 23 November 2010.

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	119387
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10199585
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lesley Hinchcliffe
Headteacher	Helen Shaw
Website	www.higham.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2016. The date of the next section 48 inspection is likely to be in autumn 2021 or spring 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics, and art and design. 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. The

inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors. They spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 11 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 10 free-text comments. They also considered the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. They reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and pupils to discuss provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour. They looked at documentation associated with these areas.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

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