

Inspection of Whitfield CofE Primary School

Whitfield, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 8JH

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this welcoming school. Staff expect pupils to behave well and work hard in lessons. Pupils respond with a strong work ethic and their behaviour is exemplary. This helps pupils to achieve well.

The school's Christian values, such as 'trust, wisdom and justice', are central to the school ethos. Pupils talk confidently about having courage to stand for what is right in difficult situations.

Parents and carers appreciate how their children are nurtured and cared for. This includes parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One parent shared the views of many when they stated that the school 'is supportive and creates a nurturing and safe environment in which to build confidence and a joy of learning'.

Pupils said that they cannot remember a time when other pupils bullied them. They say that there is no name-calling and pupils are never unkind to each other. Pupils describe school as 'like a family', saying that 'everyone looks after each other'. Older pupils are highly positive role models to the younger pupils. Pupils take their responsibilities, such as playground buddies, worship leaders or school councillors, seriously.

Pupils say that they feel safe. Lessons about online safety provide guidance for pupils to stay safe and recognise risks.

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

All leaders share the executive headteacher's vision for excellence. He works closely with the head of school, and all staff. Everyone has clear roles and responsibilities. All leaders and staff appreciate the strong support that they receive from the trust.

Leaders have worked skilfully to design a curriculum for a small school with mixed-age classes. Leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Curriculum plans include the order in which pupils need to learn those core facts. Teachers check what pupils know in lessons. Teachers use this information to adjust the work they set. All pupils access challenging curriculum content appropriate to their year group. They are ready for the next stage of their education, including moving to secondary school.

The leader of mathematics has strong subject knowledge. Pupils have a secure understanding of mathematical operations. Pupils in Year 5 could find factors and multiples of a number by using the multiplication facts they had learned previously. In the same lesson, younger pupils used their knowledge of 'times tables' and 'place value' to solve their multiplication calculations.

In science, pupils know how to conduct a 'fair test' and use scientific vocabulary with confidence. Pupils in Year 3 learned about scientific forces, while older pupils in the lesson planned scientific enquiry and generated their own questions.

In art and design, pupils learn the techniques used by famous artists in history and modern times. Pupils' sketch-books show that they are encouraged to experiment by using specific skills and knowledge. Pupils create unique and expressive artwork.

Children develop their language skills and vocabulary in Nursery. They are ready to start learning phonics as soon as they enter Reception. Phonics and reading lessons in key stage 1 build on this strong start. Leaders check regularly that pupils are becoming confident readers. Teachers adapt their planning to ensure pupils can catch up if they start to fall behind in their reading. By the time they reach key stage 2, pupils are avid readers.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. The learning environment is inviting to young children. They access a different curriculum to key stage 1 pupils in the same class. Staff manage this skilfully. Children are curious and explore indoor learning areas independently. When the teacher provides focused teaching activities outdoors, they are of a high quality. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to access the outdoor learning environment independently.

Pupils with SEND are supported well in lessons. Teachers adapt their curriculum planning so that pupils with SEND can access the same learning as their peers. Where necessary, pupils use a range of resources to support their needs. This means that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in lessons, in the playground and around school. Pupils are incredibly polite and respectful to each other, adults and visitors.

Staff take every opportunity to promote pupils' personal development. Christian values underpin all aspects of school life. Pupils understand the importance of some of the fundamental British values, such as mutual respect. Although leaders promote the other areas of these values, pupils cannot talk about them as confidently. For example, pupils are not as knowledgeable about different faiths, cultures and individual liberty.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They support and challenge leaders. Staff are proud to work at Whitfield. They feel valued and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Staff say that networking with other schools in the trust supports them with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance. Staff and governors know that it is everyone's responsibility to keep children safe. Leaders carry out the necessary safety checks on staff and volunteers before they start working with pupils.

All staff access up-to-date training so that they can recognise signs of abuse or harm. Record-keeping is thorough and leaders take timely action to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders work with external professionals to provide identified pupils and their families with additional support or guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders promote the fundamental British values, pupils' ability to recall what they have learned is variable. Pupils can share their awareness of mutual respect, but they do not have strong understanding of different cultures, faiths and individual liberty. Leaders should ensure that they further develop the opportunities within the curriculum, including educational visits, so that pupils acquire this knowledge.
- In the early years outdoor space, there are limited opportunities for children to independently explore their learning environment. This means that children have to wait for adults to lead focused sessions outside. Leaders should further develop the outdoor provision so that children can experience high-quality activities independently.

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	144478
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10200752
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Clarke
Executive Headteacher	Rob Blake
Website	www.whitfieldprimary.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a section 48 inspection in July 2019.
- The school offers provision for nursery-age children.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, curriculum subject leaders, teachers, the designated safeguarding leader and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke to the chief executive officer and the school improvement officer. The inspector held

telephone conversations with the director of education within the Church of England diocese and the director of the trust board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading/phonics, mathematics, science and art and design. They met with curriculum leaders for these subjects and carried out joint lesson visits with the executive headteacher. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection. They considered 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Each response included an additional written free-text comment. Inspectors also considered six staff views via the Ofsted online staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- To consider the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, inspectors checked safeguarding records, attendance records, the single central record and safeguarding policies. Inspectors discussed safeguarding procedures with the designated safeguarding leader, pupils, staff and governors.
- Inspectors met with teachers to discuss their experiences of working at the school, including their workload.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Nugent

Ofsted Inspector

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