

Inspection of a good school: Ebchester CofE Primary School

Shaw Lane, Ebchester, Consett, County Durham, DH8 0QB

Inspection dates:

1 December 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ebchester CofE Primary School is a kind and caring place. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teaching happens without interruption. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Pupils say that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils demonstrate the fundamental British values of tolerance and respect in the way they behave towards one another. Pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to be buddies with children in reception. Pupils take this job seriously. They want to be good role models for their younger friends. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent said, 'the staff are all approachable and the school excels in its pastoral care'.

Pupils enjoy school. They relish the opportunities they get to learn outside, in the forest school. Many pupils said this is one of their favourite places to learn.

Leaders are in the process of making changes to many areas of the curriculum. This work is further along in some areas. In subjects such as mathematics and computing, the curriculum does not carefully build on what pupils have learned before.

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

Leaders have worked hard to introduce a new phonics programme since September 2021. All staff have received the training they need to teach phonics with consistency. Teachers use assessments to match the books pupils read to the sounds that they know. However, for a small, but significant minority of pupils, phonics lessons do not focus with enough precision on the sounds they need to learn next.

Extra reading lessons for pupils in key stage 1 help to develop their understanding of texts. Older pupils read regularly with their teachers. Pupils who struggle to learn their phonics get the extra help they need. Daily story time captivates pupils' imagination and promotes pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils spoke about meeting the poet Joseph Coelho, via a zoom call, as part of their studies during Black History Month.

In mathematics, the curriculum is going through a process of change. Leaders have started to reorganise the order in which mathematics is taught. Teachers provide pupils with practical resources to help them understand abstract mathematical ideas. Teachers use time in lessons to revisit pupils' previous learning and check what they can remember. However, curriculum plans are not sequenced to build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. They do not clearly identify what they want pupils to learn and when. Mathematical language is not given enough priority. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and they do not understand age-appropriate, mathematical vocabulary.

In curriculum areas such as art and computing, the curriculum is not clearly sequenced. Leaders have identified what they want pupils to achieve in some year groups, such as Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6. In this respect, curriculum plans are suitably ambitious. However, plans do not show what pupils need to know and be able to do in other year groups. The early years has not been included as part of the art curriculum plans. It does not represent a whole school curriculum.

The early years leader is also making changes to the curriculum. Curriculum themes are being changed to reflect children's interests. The early years leader ensures that phonics and mathematics are a high priority. Children are taught mathematics and phonics every day. Adults then work with small groups of children to revisit counting and recognising numbers as children learn through play.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given the support they need to access the same curriculum as their peers. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) draws on the support of outside agencies to access help and advice when it is needed.

Pupils learn about other cultures and religious beliefs. They celebrate and accept difference. Pupils told inspectors, 'it is not what's on the outside, but what is on the inside that matters'. The personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils to have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.

Leaders have considered the impact of repeated school closures on pupils' well-being. In response, staff have provided pupils with a wide selection of clubs and activities. Leaders promote pupils' physical and mental well-being through activities, such as the daily mile and yoga classes.

Leaders are supportive of all staff. They take steps to help staff manage their workload. The governing body are supportive of the work of the school. Leaders work with the local authority to review and improve what they do. For example, leaders had recently commissioned a review of their safeguarding practices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates and training for staff. As a result, safeguarding is maintained as a high priority and staff are clear on their role in keeping children safe.

Leaders ensure that all the required checks are undertaken to make sure adults are suitable to work with pupils. During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders adjusted their safeguarding policies to reflect arrangements for remote learning.

Systems for reporting concerns are understood by all staff. This ensures that when concerns are identified, they are quickly passed on to the designated safeguarding lead.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics lessons, for some pupils, do not teach them the sounds they need to know with enough precision. This means that some pupils are introduced to sounds too quickly and before they have a secure understanding of earlier learning. Leaders should ensure that phonics teaching only moves pupils on when they are secure with the sounds they have been taught previously.
- Curriculum plans, in subjects such as mathematics and computing, are not well sequenced. They do not identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn as they progress from the early years to Year 6. Because of this, pupils' knowledge does not build on previous learning. They have gaps in their understanding and their vocabulary. Leaders should ensure that in all areas of the curriculum, learning is carefully sequenced. Plans need to identify the knowledge that pupils will be taught and by when.

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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 in November 2016.

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	114214
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10200390
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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geoff Gibson
Headteacher	Rachel Clasper
Website	http://www.ebchester.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ebchester Church of England Primary School is a voluntary controlled school. It is part of the Diocese of Durham.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2016.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is smaller than average.
- The school runs its own breakfast- and after-school club.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional funding through the pupil premium grant is lower than national averages.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. Meetings were held with the special education needs coordinator (SENCo) and early years leader.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and computing. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited reading and phonics lessons in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Inspectors spoke with a selection of parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors met with the local authority school leadership adviser.
- Inspectors met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed the 32 responses that were received through Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire as well as the 30 free text responses. Inspectors reviewed the 36 responses that were received through the pupil survey and the nine responses received through the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, including during lesson visits, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- We scrutinised the school's safeguarding documentation and discussed behaviour and attendance with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.

Inspection team

Chris Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Belfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021