

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

Church Lane, Whalley, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9SY

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to come to school. They feel safe because of the nurturing environment provided by staff. The pupils who spoke with the inspector said that they can talk to an adult at any time if they feel worried about anything.

Pupils know that staff expect them to behave well. Pupils are confident that staff would address any signs of bullying quickly and decisively. Pupils have a good understanding of the harmful effects of bullying, because these are regularly covered in lessons and assemblies. This helps to create a harmonious atmosphere in the school.

Most pupils meet the high expectations that teachers set for their learning. Pupils, parents and carers like the fact that the curriculum is enhanced by a range of trips and events, for example the recent museum visit where older pupils learned about the Second World War. Leaders are working on making the curriculum even better, so that pupils develop a more in-depth understanding of all of the subjects that they learn.

The vast majority of parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the support that they have had from staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Leaders and governors have set a clear vision for the development of the school and its curriculum. Although pupils currently achieve well in subjects across the curriculum, leaders want pupils to do even better. Leaders have started to develop their subject curriculums. They have clearly defined what they want pupils to learn in English and especially in mathematics. In other subjects, the curriculum plans do not prioritise the essential learning that leaders want pupils to know and remember. As a result, teachers and pupils are not clear about which aspects of their learning are the most useful in helping them to deepen their understanding.

Leaders have put a wide range of initiatives in place to help foster a love of reading and to help pupils catch up on learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a specific focus on developing pupils' phonics knowledge. In the early years, this has ensured that most

children are on track with the planned curriculum. This has helped the majority of pupils in key stage 1 to become confident and fluent readers as they move into key stage 2. However, for a small number of pupils who find reading difficult, the extra support that they receive is not enabling them to catch up with the planned curriculum quickly enough.

In the early years, staff settle children into routines quickly. Staff interact well with children to keep them engaged in their learning. This positive attitude towards learning continues as pupils move throughout the school. Disruption to pupils' learning is rare. Where it does occur, pupils told the inspector that it is dealt with well by staff.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at the earliest opportunity. There are systems in place to identify children with any additional needs as soon as they start school in the Reception Year. All staff regularly review any concerns that they may have about pupils' learning as they progress through the school. Once needs are identified, the individual plans for pupils' learning help staff to successfully adapt their support. This ensures that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as other pupils.

Following the removal of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, senior leaders have been quick to restart trips and other events. These help to bring the curriculum to life and to celebrate the local culture of the school. Leaders have also been responsive to the needs of pupils, such as implementing a mental-health project in Years 5 and 6. Some of these pupils have been trained to be mental-health champions for others in the playground, so that pupils are never lonely or upset.

Governors question senior leaders well about the quality of education in the school. They assure themselves about the accuracy of the information that they receive through external reports and by checking with subject leaders. As a result, the governors are knowledgeable and understand the school well. The direction that leaders and governors have set for school improvement has pulled the staff team together to give the staff a shared sense of purpose. Governors have continued to check that leaders are considerate of the staff's well-being and workload. Staff spoke highly of senior leaders, who make them feel valued and appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have a strong understanding of the processes and procedures that they must follow if they have any concerns about a pupil. Staff are well placed to identify any signs of abuse, because they know pupils well. Leaders ensure that early help is arranged for pupils and their families when they need extra support.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online. Leaders ensure that this is also developed through revisiting key messages about safety in assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The extra support that pupils receive to help them read well is not having enough impact. As a result, some pupils are not catching-up with their peers quickly enough. This hinders their ability to read fluently and with understanding. Leaders should review their approach to supporting pupils who find reading more difficult.
- The plans for subjects other than English and mathematics do not clearly identify the most essential knowledge that pupils will need to know for their future learning. This means that teachers are not always sure which concepts to prioritise and reinforce. As a result, some pupils cannot recall their prior learning clearly enough. Leaders should ensure that they further refine the curriculum to define the key knowledge that pupils must know and remember, so that they can achieve even more in these subjects.

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 first 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	119429
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10204424
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Borland
Headteacher	Richard Blackburn
Website	www.whalleyceprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Whalley Primary is a Church of England school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of a religious school took place in October 2017.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has extended its provision to include two new classrooms on site, as well as leasing a classroom at the nearby library. The school has increased its published admissions number from 40 to 45.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector also looked at a sample of curriculum plans for science, art and design, design technology, history and physical education. He reviewed a sample of work for pupils' writing and for science.
- The inspector met with pupils to ask them about their learning in a range of subjects and about the opportunities that they have for their personal development.
- The inspector met with pupils from across the school to ask them about safeguarding. The inspector reviewed documentation, which included the school's safeguarding policy, the register of the checks carried out on new employees, and safeguarding records.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes, during assembly and when walking round the school. He discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, senior leaders and other staff.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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