

# Inspection of a good school: East Cowton Church of England Primary School

Golden Acres, East Cowton, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 0BD

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Inspection date:

8 March 2022

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in the family atmosphere of this small school. Relationships are extremely strong. Staff want every pupil to shine and they celebrate each pupil's interests and talents. Staff notice quickly when pupils are having difficulties. This ensures pupils get prompt help.

Exemplary behaviour is typical. Boys and girls of all ages happily play together. They enjoy a game of football and climbing on equipment in the playground. Older pupils look after their younger school mates, such as at lunchtime. This is a responsibility that they take seriously.

Instances of bullying and the use of unacceptable discriminatory language are exceptionally rare. Pupils trust adults to resolve any issues so they do not happen again.

In lessons, pupils work hard in response to the high expectations of staff. Teachers make sure that pupils learn to work together. Younger pupils become independent quickly. They cooperate with each other to complete tasks.

Pupils love reading. They help to choose the books that are bought for the library. They recommend stories to each other so that they become familiar with many different authors. High-quality books are found all over school. They are used to deepen pupils' knowledge of the curriculum. For example, a picture book has provided the stimulus for an enticing role play area. This helps younger children to learn about life before they were born.

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

Leaders have designed a new curriculum. The curriculum ensures pupils know and remember more as they move through school. Subject leaders make sure that staff help pupils to keep up with the curriculum. Pupils learn mathematical knowledge in small chunks. These chunks build up in an order that means pupils become confident to solve more complex problems.

Staff check pupils' understanding frequently. They take action to make sure gaps in pupils' knowledge are closed as quickly as possible. During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have noticed that pupils' times tables knowledge is not secure. Extra practice has been put in place to help them catch up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the right support so they progress well.

The curriculum in some subjects, such as history and religious education, is not as well developed. It does not include all aspects of knowledge that pupils need to acquire. In addition, pupils' ability to apply their knowledge in different subjects is varied. Leaders know that these subjects need further refinement. Subject leaders have begun this task but it is not completed.

Pupils enjoy lessons. Teachers plan interesting activities. Their clear explanations help pupils remember more of the curriculum and make links between different topics. For example, pupils knew that the Mayans wore masks to frighten their enemies. They compared this with the way the British Army used drumming to create fear. Teachers ask questions frequently to check and to deepen pupils' knowledge.

Children learn to read quickly. They progress through a well-structured phonics programme guided by expert staff. They read books well matched to their capabilities and become enthusiastic, fluent readers. They have many opportunities to read for pleasure in the cosy book area and role play among others. Most older pupils become avid readers. They have a sophisticated knowledge of different story types.

Children in the early years settle into school well and mix with older children confidently. They are well supported by caring adults who help them to develop good communication skills. Their classroom is filled with interesting equipment and resources to support children across the areas of learning. They enjoy exploring an old typewriter or creating models with wood or dough.

The wider curriculum supports pupils' personal development and nurtures their talents well. All pupils in key stage 2 learn to play a brass instrument. Good opportunities exist to play sport and take exercise. Forest school visits help to promote pupils' independence and life skills. The curriculum is once again enriched by visits following postponements due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff are aware that pupils need to learn about life beyond their local community. Pupils learn about the diversity of lifestyles in modern Britain. They know that not all families are the same. They talk about the importance of tolerance and respect for everyone. However, they do not securely know the vocabulary that supports this knowledge.

The new local governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors hold leaders to account. They also provide support. Governors work with leaders to manage their considerable workload. All staff say they feel supported by leaders. They have benefitted from the collaboration across the four schools.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. They are alert to any changes which may be a concern. Detailed records ensure that leaders know that appropriate action takes place. Leaders work well with a range of services to ensure the interests of pupils come first. Leaders make appropriate checks to safeguard pupils. All adults receive regular training. They are confident that they know what to do if they have a concern.

Pupils have a good range of opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They are clear about the dangers of being online. They know it is important to respect each other.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- The curriculum in some subjects is not as clear as it needs to be. For example, the history curriculum does not identify the disciplinary knowledge pupils need. This contrasts with detail of substantive knowledge that helps pupils learn about events in history. As a result, pupils' ability to apply their knowledge is inconsistent. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in each subject identifies substantive knowledge needed by pupils. Each subject should include disciplinary knowledge that helps pupils work in an informed way in the subject as well as having knowledge about it.
- Pupils do not have a secure command of the vocabulary they need to confidently discuss issues linked to diversity. This means that pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage in their education. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is adapted to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

## 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 predecessor school, East Cowton Church of England Primary School, to be good in September 2011.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144157
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212310
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Rt Revd Paul Ferguson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Dudman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.eckf.dalesmat.org">www.eckf.dalesmat.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- East Cowton Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in November 2017. When its predecessor school, East Cowton Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- In 2015 the school federated with Kirkby Fleetham Church of England Primary School. Two further schools, Barton Church of England Primary School and Ravensworth Church of England Primary School joined the federation in September 2019. The four schools are known as the Cornerstones Schools. All schools share one local governing body and headteacher. Each teacher provides leadership of a subject across all four schools.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in September 2016.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff, pupils, governors and the chief executive officer of the Dales Academies Trust.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the Diocese of Leeds.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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. An inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed curriculum plans and spoke to staff about some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record. They talked to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and lunchtimes. They spoke to pupils and to all staff about their views on behaviour.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and school development plans and policies.
- Inspectors considered the four free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector met with parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to all staff in the school and subject leaders who are based in other schools in the federation.

## Inspection team

Susan Waugh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Gorchach	Ofsted Inspector

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