

# Inspection of a good school: Witton Gilbert Primary School

Sacrison Lane, Witton Gilbert, Durham DH7 6TF

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2022

## Outcome

Witton Gilbert Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders in this small community primary school teach their pupils to appreciate the world. Pupils respect the environment. They are encouraged to explore and play outdoors. Pupils wear their wellies during social times, and each class has a well-tended gardening bed. Pupils enjoy gardening club and 'eco group'.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils will learn. Leaders ensure that pupils' learning is supported by practical experiences outside the classroom. Leaders are passionate about being an inclusive community. Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively so that they are included in all aspects of school life. Leaders have created a culture where pupils are resilient. Pupils do not worry about making mistakes. They are happy to 'have a go'. Older pupils enjoy residential trips where they are challenged to push themselves.

Pupils behave well. They are happy and feel cared for. They know that teachers look after them. Pupils are taught how to deal with friendship issues. Pupils agree that bullying is rare. They say that teachers tackle bullying. Most pupils would report bullying. However, some pupils feel that some teachers take bullying more seriously than others.

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

Leaders see teaching reading as a priority. Staff benefit from ongoing training to ensure that they are up to date on how to teach reading most effectively. Pupils who find reading difficult are identified quickly and supported effectively. Staff enjoy sharing stories with pupils. Leaders choose stories carefully to celebrate diversity and broaden pupils' experience.

Leaders have redesigned and improved the curriculum in recent years. Leaders have used external support to make sure that staff are supported to create high-quality subject curriculums. Leaders have considered how pupils will build their knowledge progressively. They have decided what the key knowledge is that they want pupils to learn. However,

this key knowledge is not regularly revisited or checked in some subjects.

Leaders have created an inclusive environment. Staff make effective adaptations so that pupils with SEND can learn successfully. Teachers use clear explanations in lessons. Teachers model tasks well to make sure that pupils understand. Some teachers use questioning effectively to draw out pupils' understanding. In phonics and mathematics, teachers uncover gaps in pupils' understanding and close them very quickly. In other subjects, staff do not check what pupils have remembered as effectively.

Pupils cooperate and treat each other with respect. Even the youngest children offer to help each other. Pupils pay attention and participate in lessons. Teachers deal with any disruption well. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They behave sensibly in corridors and outside their classrooms. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour are supported effectively. Children in the early years are encouraged to be independent. They benefit from well-established routines and high expectations. Children tackle problems with confidence. They set challenges for each other, for example challenging each other to find or complete patterns.

Leaders have ensured that pupils understand their role in the local community. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities where they engage with the community, including taking part in Remembrance services and singing with local volunteer groups. Older pupils in school apply for 'jobs' within school so they can develop their sense of responsibility. Leaders ensure that pupils have a wide range of experiences. All pupils will visit a theatre, a library and a museum. All pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 learn the clarinet.

Leaders value pupils' development beyond academic subjects. Pupils learn about how to manage their emotions. They are encouraged to discuss how they feel. Leaders have prioritised pupils' mental health. Leaders make sure that pupils always have someone to talk to. Pupils learn about how to manage relationships. Staff ensure that pupils understand tolerance and respect. Pupils display these attitudes around school.

Staff feel well supported and valued. They explain that leaders listen to their suggestions. Leaders consider the well-being of staff. Staff are proud to work at this school. Parents appreciate the supportive attitude of staff. Parents particularly praise how staff help pupils with SEND.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

In this small school, staff know their pupils very well. They are vigilant and recognise and report any signs of concern. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe. Pupils learn about how to stay safe outside school, including in relation to road safety. Pupils also learn about the risks they face online and how to manage them.

Leaders take timely action to protect vulnerable pupils. They work with external agencies to provide the right support for these pupils and their families. Leaders are persistent in securing that external help. Record-keeping reflects this.

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

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

- Pupils struggle to remember some of the content that they have learned over time. They do not revisit key knowledge regularly. This means it is difficult for them to build on their prior learning and secure their understanding. Leaders should ensure they introduce robust systems to help pupils remember what they have learned in the long term. They should also ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding in order to uncover gaps in pupils' understanding and close them very quickly.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

## 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.

## 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>	114122
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240608
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michelle Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paula Nelson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wittongilbert.durham.sch.uk">www.wittongilbert.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- 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 met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. They checked logs of actions taken to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector checked the single central record and other documentation regarding safer recruitment practices.
- The inspector spoke with a range of pupils and staff, both formally and informally, during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for personal development.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also considered additional communications from parents. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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