

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

Wreaks Road, Birstwith, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 2NJ

Inspection dates:

5 October 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

A Christian ethos is at the heart of this Church of England school. Leaders encourage staff and pupils to treat each other with respect and dignity. Leaders regularly remind pupils of the gospel verse describing Jesus giving a new commandment: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Pupils try very hard to live up to this. As a result, bullying is extremely rare.

Parents and carers fully support their children's learning at home. All staff and parents share leaders' high ambition for every pupil. However, in this highly aspirational context, the curriculum is not ambitious enough to meet the needs of all pupils fully.

Leaders want pupils to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils come to school ready to learn. They behave extremely well in lessons. Pupils are excited by learning.

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

The headteacher led a curriculum review before taking up her post. This early evaluation helped her to 'hit the ground running' when she joined the staff in September 2021. Some subject leaders began leading their subjects as recently as September 2022. Despite this, the new curriculum is well established in all subjects.

Curriculum expertise from other local schools is used well by leaders. For example, a leader for English in another school also leads English at Birstwith. This partnership working is helping to keep teachers' workload manageable.

Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum for mixed-age classes. Pupils follow the same topics in history or geography, but their learning is matched to the curriculum objectives for pupils in each year group. The history curriculum is enriched by educational visits well. For example, the key stage 1 'castles' topic included visits to Knaresborough and Skipton castles. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to build on pupils' prior and extensive

knowledge. As a result, the curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils well consistently.

Pupils enjoy English and behave well in lessons. Many Birstwith children already have secure phonics knowledge when they start school. This helps them learn to read quickly. All Year 1 pupils achieved the standard in the phonics screening check in 2022.

The headteacher is the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). The headteacher is training another member of staff to share this responsibility. This strengthens leadership capacity for supporting pupils with SEND.

Leaders use diagnostic tests skilfully. Pupils' moderate learning difficulties are assessed so that each pupil's specific processing difficulties are accurately identified. The SENCo gives teachers ideas to meet each pupil's needs. Teachers adjust the curriculum accordingly. This may be by simply allowing pupils more thinking time before expecting a response to questions. It involves presenting information in smaller chunks. Teachers provide sensory breaks or music therapy for pupils who need them. This precise approach is helping pupils with SEND to make good progress.

The curriculum for pupils' wider development is effective. Pupils learn about democracy first-hand. Pupil representatives from every year group are elected to the pupil council. Each class proposes local, national and global charities. They put their case to the pupil council using reasoned arguments. Ideas are debated. The pupil council makes the final decision. This year, pupils chose to support the Harrogate foodbank in the 'local charity' category. Pupils' reasoning for this selection contributes well to their moral education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Leaders have skilfully adapted the curriculum to ensure that pupils know how to stay safe. They teach water safety because of risks posed by the local river. Pupils understand cold water shock and the danger of currents.

Staff know that Harrogate is a 'hot spot' for county lines. County lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. Leaders have adapted safeguarding training accordingly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils consistently well. Some pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently challenging and matched well to the needs of all pupils.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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

Unique reference number	121550
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10211412
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda Turvey
Headteacher	Victoria Kirkman
Website	www.birstwith.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- This village school is much smaller than the typical primary school. Class one includes all pupils from the Reception Year, and Years 1 and 2. There are only four children in the Reception Year.
- This is a voluntary controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Leeds. The diocese completed the last section 48 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools' on 17 June 2017. The timescales for reinspection have been extended in light of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the early years leader.
- A meeting was held with four of the school's governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors met representatives from the Leeds diocese and the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, 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.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated on arrival at school, in the dining room and at breaktimes.
- The designated safeguarding lead met inspectors to discuss recruitment and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors reviewed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and survey responses from staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Hussey

Ofsted Inspector

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