

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

Mill End, Northleach, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 3HJ

Inspection dates:

12 January 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

'This school is a wonderful place, and we feel so lucky' is a view shared by parents and shows what it is like to be a pupil at Northleach. Pupils appreciate all the school has to offer and are happy to come every day. Leaders have high expectations and, as a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and during social times. They fully understand the school values and follow the school rules. Pupils comment how they are taught to look after each other. Bullying is rare. Pupils say if it does happen, adults deal with it promptly.

Pupils are given many responsibilities within school. These include well-being champions to promote mental health and the worship committee, who contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils feel listened to. They are adamant that adults allow them to 'have a voice' to enable them to share their views of the school. A wide range of clubs cultivate pupils' interests, particularly in sports and music.

The school offers high-quality pastoral support for pupils. This ensures that pupils feel safe in school and are ready to learn.

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

Leaders are ambitious to provide a broad curriculum that excites pupils from the time they start in Reception Year. The curriculum is well planned. It sets out the key knowledge that pupils need to know, understand and remember.

Reading is at the core of pupils' education. Leaders have an expectation that every pupil will be a fluent reader by the end of Year 2. Children in the early years get off to a great start. Staff have a sharp focus on developing children's language and communication. Phonics is taught from the day children start in Reception Year. Children confidently practise saying and writing the sounds they are learning. Staff keep a close eye on pupils who are not keeping up. They provide extra support to help them catch up.

Leaders prioritise reading. They ensure that pupils have access to high-quality books across a range of genres, cultures and topics. These books help to enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' vocabulary. Pupils make regular use of the library to select books to read for pleasure and gain new knowledge. Daily reading sessions help pupils to understand the meaning of what they read. By the time pupils leave school, they are confident and competent readers.

In most subjects, the planned learning is securely in place. However, leaders rightly recognise that some foundation subjects are not yet embedded as effectively as others. Leaders have plans in place to ensure all subjects are well-established across all year groups.

Teachers use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' learning. They revisit prior learning to help the most important knowledge stick in pupils' memory.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help they need. Leaders have supported staff to adapt learning to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils with SEND learn the same subjects and content as their peers.

Leaders provide a range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils talk with enthusiasm about their contribution to the wider community, such as visiting the local residential care home and appearing on the community radio. These activities support pupils' wider development and build confidence.

The school's Christian foundation underpins its approach to pupils' spiritual growth and character. They demonstrate their excellent personal development in the way they behave and discuss important issues. Pupils are kind and, where necessary, forgiving of each other. They understand the importance of respect when discussing life choices and family models different from their own. Pupils appreciate the focus staff have on their mental health. For example, they welcome the 'listening room' and 'listening box' where they can share any worries or concerns with an adult. However, pupils told inspectors, 'We don't really need to use them as we have little to worry about'.

Staff told inspectors they love working at Northleach. They value the training which develops their knowledge and expertise. Staff welcome the focus leaders place on their mental health and well-being. Leaders are conscious of staff workload and consider ways to help them manage this.

Governors are aware of their statutory responsibilities. They know what is working well and what needs to get better. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education and care pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding to keep pupils safe. They respond swiftly to support pupils and families in need of help and work closely with other agencies. Staff carry out the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand risk, including healthy relationships. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any worries. However, there are examples where safeguarding records lack sufficient detail.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not fully embedded in all of the foundation subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain the planned knowledge they need to achieve well across these subjects. Leaders need to complete the process of embedding the planned curriculum effectively in all subjects.
- Staff respond to safeguarding concerns swiftly. However, sometimes, the information leaders record about safeguarding incidents lacks sufficient detail. Therefore, leaders could miss vital information. Leaders need to make sure that records clearly and consistently demonstrate the action taken in response to any safeguarding concerns.

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 March 2013.

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	115641
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10227971
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	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Laura Blundell
Headteacher	Kirsty Williams
Website	www.northleach.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a new headteacher and deputy headteacher appointed since the last inspection.
- The school is a Church of England school within the diocese of Gloucester. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2018.
- The school operates provision for pupils before and after 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. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2, and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school’s safeguarding documentation, including the safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding leaders act on concerns about pupils’ welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors, about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including the school self-evaluation and school improvement plans.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors met with leaders to discuss how they respond to behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other school staff and five members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the education performance adviser for Gloucestershire local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Hill

Ofsted Inspector

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