

Inspection of a good school: Walverden Primary School

Bracewell Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0TL

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Walverden Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils at Walverden Primary School are caring and welcoming. Pupils, including children in early years, enjoy coming to school. They value the nurture that they receive from leaders and their teachers.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations set by leaders for their behaviour. Pupils are respectful and polite to their peers and adults. Leaders resolve any instances of bullying sensitively and swiftly. This helps pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders and governors want pupils, including those with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND), to thrive academically. Leaders know the pupils and the local community well. They have shaped the curriculum to meet pupils' interests and to help them to achieve well.

Pupils embrace leadership roles, such as being an eco-warrior and learning champion. Such positions improve pupils' ability to interact with others, which supports their confidence. Pupils enjoy serving their wider community through making hampers for the elderly and fundraising for charities. Pupils keep healthy through taking part in sports competitions, dance and swimming activities.

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

Although the outcomes at the end of the Reception Year and Year 2 suggest that pupils in this school do not achieve well, this does not accurately reflect how well pupils learn. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic left some pupils with gaps in their learning. In addition, a high proportion of pupils join the school at different times of the year. Many pupils within the school speak English as an additional language. Leaders understand the needs

of pupils very well. As a result, they ensure that communication and language, often the key barriers to pupils' success, have the highest priority. This enables pupils to catch up.

Leaders have crafted a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. In most subjects, and in the early years, leaders have identified what pupils should know and when this will be taught. The curriculum in these subjects is shaped so that pupils can revisit their prior learning. This helps them to deepen their understanding over time.

This is not the case for a few other subjects, however. In these areas, leaders have not considered how pupils' new learning will connect with what they already know and can do. This hinders some pupils from building their knowledge securely.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They are well trained to deliver the curriculum. Teachers keep a sharp focus on key vocabulary at all times. This develops pupils' use of language when learning about new content. Mostly, teachers check what pupils have learned. However, at times, these checks are not effective enough in making sure that pupils have remembered what has been taught. This hinders teachers from addressing any gaps in learning. Consequently, at times, some pupils find it hard to recall their learning.

Pupils read often and regularly. They enjoy reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Leaders invite authors into school to talk about their books, and reading ambassadors encourage pupils of all ages to read. As a result, pupils develop an enthusiasm for reading.

Provision in the Nursery Year sets children up well for learning phonics. Teachers prioritise children's language and communication skills very effectively. Children are introduced to stories, rhymes and songs, which helps them gain a grounding in sounds. In the Reception Year and in key stage 1, well-trained teachers deliver the phonics curriculum effectively. Teachers choose books that encourage pupils to practise the sounds they know. This helps pupils to read with confidence. Teachers check to make sure that pupils are gaining the appropriate phonics knowledge to their age and stage of development. If anyone is not keeping pace with the programme, they receive support to help them catch up.

Leaders and teachers identify pupils with SEND quickly. They ensure that these pupils receive effective support to access the curriculum and achieve well.

Pupils are motivated and keen to learn. They follow routines and abide by the school rules. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Some pupils do not attend school regularly. However, leaders take swift action to support individual pupils and their families. This has helped to reduce some absenteeism.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop an understanding of the wider world. Pupils benefit from celebrating a range of faith-related events, attending competitions and visiting the

theatre, museum and zoo. Leaders also prepare pupils well for life beyond school. Pupils receive first-aid training and are exposed to different careers through the curriculum.

Governors are equipped with the skills and expertise they need to provide support and challenge to leaders. Staff's workload and well-being are at the forefront of leaders' decisions. Staff are supported through regular networking opportunities with colleagues in other schools. They feel valued. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority for leaders and staff in school. Staff are well trained. Leaders have created secure reporting and recording systems so that any pupil at risk of harm is identified and supported.

Pupils are taught about ways to keep safe, such as when cycling, crossing the road or swimming. Pupils also learn about hazards associated with harmful substances. They know what to do when making online friendships or if they are faced with peer pressure.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not made it clear how pupils will build on what they already know. This stops some pupils from building their knowledge securely over time. Leaders should identify and then carefully order the key knowledge that they want pupils to remember.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not as effective as they could be in identifying gaps in knowledge. This means that some pupils find it hard to recall what they have been taught. Leaders should ensure that teachers are well equipped to check that pupils know and remember more of the curriculum.

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	119178
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226093
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Farhan Khaliq
Headteacher	Humma Ahmed
Website	http://www.walverdenprimaryschool.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- Leaders provide before- and after-school care for pupils.
- The school has recently appointed a new leader for SEND.

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 this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. She also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector analysed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. The inspector spoke with a range of pupils, staff and leaders to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. She talked with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of children's and pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with children and pupils. The inspector also observed some pupils reading to trusted staff.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of children and pupils in class and as they moved around school. She also observed pupils playing at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke with groups of children and pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also met with parents and carers before school to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Amina Modan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023