

# Inspection of a good school: Ashleigh Primary School

Ross Street, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2JT

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Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Ashleigh Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are full of smiles as they arrive at Ashleigh Primary School each morning. They are greeted warmly by the kind and caring staff. Pupils said that their lessons are fun and interesting. They enjoy the wide range of trips and visits that leaders provide, including visits to Paris and to London.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils strive to meet these aims. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. In lessons, pupils work very cooperatively. They listen carefully to their teachers. At breaktimes, pupils play happily together. They appreciate the wide range of activities that staff provide for them.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They share any worries or concerns with their teachers. Leaders take effective action to deal with any rare incidents of bullying.

Pupils are fully involved in school life. Older pupils take great pride in undertaking a wide range of leadership roles. For example, they organise a weekly assembly, awarding golden ties for good behaviour and celebrating pupils' birthdays. Pupils help to organise playtime games and activities. They enjoy helping out in the school office. Leaders ensure that pupils make full use of the school's lovely grounds, for example, growing fruit and vegetables in the school's garden.

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

Leaders have put in place a broad, balanced curriculum that pupils enjoy. Across subjects, leaders have considered the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. Leaders have ensured that this knowledge is organised in logical steps, starting from the Reception Year. For example, in mathematics, pupils develop their understanding of number and place value in a well-ordered way.

Teachers make very regular checks on how well pupils are remembering the curriculum. In lessons, teachers ask questions and set regular mini quizzes to identify where pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their learning. Staff provide timely support to help pupils to catch up, where needed.

Teachers plan engaging activities that capture pupils' attention and support their learning. In most subjects, teachers ensure that pupils revisit their previous learning so that it is secure. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to embed their learning. This means that pupils sometimes forget some important aspects of the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that reading lies at the heart of the school's curriculum. Children start learning phonics from the beginning of the Reception Year. Where pupils are struggling with their early reading, staff provide carefully planned support to help them keep up. Reading books are well matched to pupils' reading expertise. This helps pupils to practise and remember their phonics. That said, a small number of pupils, who are at an early stage of reading, do not have enough practice reading with an adult in school. This slows their ability to read successfully.

Leaders encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Pupils enjoy visiting the well-stocked school library. Across classes, teachers share a range of books and stories with their classes. This starts in the Reception Year, where teachers help children to learn and experience a wide variety of stories, rhymes and songs. Pupils enjoy reading and appreciate a range of genres and authors. They develop as confident and fluent readers.

Leaders use their expertise to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Teachers give pupils with SEND the support that they need to be successful in their learning. For example, staff teach some pupils with SEND the tricky subject vocabulary that they will encounter in their forthcoming lessons. Such thoughtful adaptations help these pupils to learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Teachers help pupils to develop personally, as well as academically. For example, the wide range of clubs, such as swimming, dance, coding and netball, helps pupils to develop their skills and confidence. Pupils are fully involved in the local community, for instance, singing at a local care home. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to perform on stage to an audience, singing at local and regional events and taking part in school performances. Pupils develop as active, caring citizens, well prepared for their next steps in education.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school. They are polite, well-mannered and welcoming to visitors. Lessons are a hive of activity. Pupils work very cooperatively together. In the Reception Year, children play, learn and explore with sustained concentration. They listen carefully to what their teachers tell them. Older pupils are kind and caring role models to younger pupils.

Staff, pupils and parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. Parents were typically full of praise for the support that staff give to their children. Staff enjoy working

at the school. As one staff member said, 'We are like a family.' Staff said that leaders take full account of their workload and well-being when making decisions.

Governors know the school well. They are regular visitors. Governors provide a careful balance of challenge and support for leaders. They check that pupils are achieving as well as they should.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide staff with regular training to ensure that they can identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff report immediately any concerns that they may have. Leaders keep detailed records of these concerns and act on them promptly. Where needed, leaders work closely with other agencies to secure help for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about fire safety. They find out about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when working online. Pupils understand what to do if the actions of others make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

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

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

- A small number of pupils at an early stage of reading do not have sufficient time in school to practise their phonics by re-reading books with an adult. This means that these pupils do not develop fluency in reading as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that those pupils struggling to read with fluency benefit from very regular practice by re-reading of books with an adult, to develop their reading skills.
- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to revisit and strengthen their previous learning. This means that in these subjects, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide pupils with enough time to consolidate their knowledge of the curriculum in these subjects.

## **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 October 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>	119200
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256130
<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>	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Les Campbell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Matthews
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ashleighdarwen.co.uk">www.ashleighdarwen.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders make use of one alternative provider.
- Leaders provide a breakfast club.

## 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she met 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. She observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. She also looked at the curriculum and pupils' workbooks in some other subjects.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about school life, including behaviour.

- The inspector held meetings with a range of staff, including with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the school's special educational needs coordinator and the school's well-being lead.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and one written response from a parent. She spoke with parents at the start of the school day. She considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents about safeguarding. She spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. She reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

### **Inspection team**

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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