

Inspection of Tritlington Church of England First School

Tritlington, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 3DU

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this small rural school. They play happily together at break time, obviously having fun. Older pupils organise and lead games. Pupils know that adults always want them to do their very best. They explain that the lighthouse display shows how they need to 'let their own light shine'. Pupils live out the school values such as courage, friendship, compassion and love. They have courtesy and good manners. Pupils are keen to chat with visitors but remain respectful and polite.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that staff will look after them. They know how to manage their behaviour and to stay calm. Pupils report that bullying does not happen, but if it did, they are confident adults would deal with it. Relationships are warm and caring. Pupils show care for others, writing prayers for people in Ukraine. They trust teachers and freely share any worries or concerns with them.

Pupils are proud of their school and its grounds. They are keen to 'show off' the reading tree and chair, the orchard, the climbing wall and trim trail, and the forest with hedgehog homes. Pupils rightly say that school is a lovely place to be.

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

Leaders have devised a curriculum that meets the needs of their pupils. The knowledge children need at the end of Reception is crystal clear. This ensures that pupils have a secure foundation to start the key stage 1 curriculum.

In most subjects across the school, such as mathematics and art, leaders have identified the key ideas that link learning. The knowledge pupils acquire is well sequenced to build on what they already know. Shorter units of work help pupils to build knowledge progressively. Assessment focuses on the knowledge pupils need to remember. Teachers check to see that pupils have retained this knowledge. Teachers also regularly monitor to see if any pupil is falling behind. They make sure that the level of challenge is right for each pupil in mixed-age classes with no repetition of content. In a few subjects, such as history, key ideas need a sharper focus, so links in learning are explicit for teachers and pupils.

Leaders' passion and commitment to weave reading through all aspects of school life are evident. Phonics teaching starts in Nursery with simple rhymes and songs. Adults teach phonics every day with a structured approach. Pupils learn how to blend sounds together to read unknown words. Books that pupils take home to practise their reading match their phonics knowledge. Pupils are quickly becoming confident, fluent readers. Book swaps, the outdoor reading shed, daily stories and displays demonstrate the high priority placed on reading.

Pupils are excited to learn, and state that learning is fun. Their positive attitudes and desire to succeed help them learn. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour. Very occasionally, pupils are so excited that they shout out an answer. Children in

the early years are curious and calm. They work well together. An example of this could be seen with two children making a 'sweet smelling face shampoo' from flower petals, water and mud.

Every pupil is a priority for leaders, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same curriculum. No pupils miss out on any area of learning or school life. Pupils' additional needs are spotted early, and high-quality individual plans are put in place. This helps pupils with SEND to succeed. Teachers adapt the way work is presented or recorded to support pupils. Adults give extra help where it is needed. Teachers make daily checks to make sure that extra support is the right support.

Leaders benefit from strong and effective governance. The innovative school-based leadership and interim executive board have driven improvements, including in curriculum thinking. The school benefits from close partnerships with the diocese, the local authority and a cluster of local schools. Strong relationships with parents are based on extensive and open communication. Leaders have created a happy and inclusive culture in which staff thrive, all working closely as part of a team.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils from the very start. Pupils are expected to try to be the best that they can be. They develop tolerance and respect through learning about different cultures or different kinds of families. Pupils have the chance to experience the arts, playing drums at a music event or watching a theatre group perform in French. Their aspirations are fired by learning about careers such as engineering. Activities and events in the school forest develop pupils' sense of awe in the natural world. Visits to local points of interest, museums and other faiths' places of worship expand pupils' understanding of the wider world.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and adults know pupils and their families very well. This knowledge, supported by regular safeguarding training, helps all adults to spot when something is not quite right. Staff understand that safeguarding issues could happen in the school. Systems to raise and record issues are straightforward and well understood. Leaders follow up on concerns swiftly and take appropriate action to help pupils and families.

Leaders keep detailed records and checks on new staff. The interim executive board monitors records and documents closely. Leaders also use safeguarding partners to audit safeguarding procedures. Pupils learn how to stay safe. They learn about stranger danger, online safety and avoiding sun burn.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are not sufficiently well planned. In these subjects the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn is not sharply defined and key ideas that link learning are unclear. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to link new learning to prior knowledge. This makes it harder, in these subjects, for pupils to remember the new knowledge over time. Leaders must ensure that all curriculum areas are carefully structured, planned, and sequenced so that pupils can achieve well across the curriculum.

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	122299
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10255747
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	David Street
Co-headteachers	Katherine Stephenson and Jill O'Dell
Website	www.tritlington.northumberland.sch.uk/web
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's religious character is Christian. The diocese inspects this separately under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in May 2017. It was judged to be good. Section 48 inspections are currently scheduled within eight years of the previous inspection. This cycle has been extended to allow for the period when inspections were paused due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The school is part of the Morpeth Partnership of schools.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Meetings were held with the co-headteachers in their role as senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, safeguarding leaders and the SEND leader.
- An inspector met three members of the interim executive board, including the chair. They also met with representatives from the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle and the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics history, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about a range of curriculum subjects.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at break time and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour. A group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They looked at documents and records relating to safeguarding. The inspectors spoke to leaders, the chair of the interim executive board, diocesan representatives and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View were considered, including all written comments.
- The inspectors considered the well-being and workload of staff. They took note of the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey, including comments made by staff about their well-being.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Baines

Ofsted Inspector

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