

# Inspection of a good school: Ellingham Church of England Aided Primary School

Ellingham, Chathill, Northumberland NE67 5ET

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Inspection date:

6 June 2023

## **Outcome**

Ellingham Church of England Aided Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

The school motto of 'Small School, Big Heart' sums up the nurturing environment that leaders create at Ellingham Primary School. Relationships between staff, pupils, parents and carers are highly positive. Staff are very supportive of all pupils and know them well. Lessons are tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Senior leaders are determined to give pupils the skills and knowledge to 'become the person God intends them to be'. This is borne out in the rich curriculum, which develops pupils both socially and academically. Leaders organise a range of activities to broaden the pupils' experiences. This includes forest school, which contributes to the pupils' understanding of nature and ecology issues.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From the early years, pupils learn a strong moral code and take responsibility for their actions. Pupils are polite and considerate of one another. Those spoken to feel safe and happy in school. Pupils understand what bullying is and say it does not happen. Pupils know that adults listen to their concerns and will help them.

Leaders are unwavering in promoting the school values of stewardship and service. Pupils are proud to serve their school through their many leadership roles.

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

Leaders have constructed a very ambitious curriculum for all pupils, starting from early years. Personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education thread through the curriculum. There is a focus on celebrating and examining the heritage of the local community. This includes debating the legacy of the famous industrialist Lord

Armstrong. Pupils are articulate in discussing his inventions seen at Cragside. They also express moral opinions about Armstrong's business, manufacturing armaments. In geography, pupils undertake field trips, for example to Newcastle to find out more about life in a city. Pupils have opportunities to suggest what should be included in the curriculum. Teachers respond and adapt the curriculum to follow these interests. However, they still ensure that pupils receive their full national curriculum entitlement.

Teachers regularly check what the pupils know. This includes recapping on subject knowledge at the beginning of lessons. Pupils quickly recall their learning using subject-specific vocabulary. They have an excellent understanding of what they are learning and why they are learning it. Teachers help pupils make connections between new and prior learning. This helps them to remember even more.

Leaders readily identify pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt lessons so that pupils with SEND can access the same learning as their peers. The school is used as a positive case study, by the local authority, in SEND training.

Leaders foster a love of reading. Staff are well trained in teaching phonics. They are confident in delivery and there is consistent phonics practice throughout school. Volunteers who are experienced in the teaching of reading enrich the reading provision. One ensures that the library is well stocked with high-quality books. These reflect different cultures and a range of genres. Pupils speak highly of the library and the choice of books available to them. Pupils read frequently in school and at home. They develop their reading skills quickly and are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Pupils are very attentive in lessons. They listen well to one another and cue each other into conversations. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are high. Leaders encourage pupils to talk about their emotions. As a result of this, pupils are expressive about their feelings.

There is an impressive personal development programme. Pupils have an excellent understanding of protected characteristics and fundamental British values. Pupils learn about the major world religions. School trips and visitors to school make the curriculum more memorable. Pupils are involved in activities that improve the local area. They have planted the Ellingham Woodland to provide carbon capture for the school. Leaders ensure that the wide range of school clubs build on the pupils' unique talents.

Children in the early years thrive. They are visibly happy in school. Adults are adept at modelling language and talking with the children. There is a high level of discussion. As a result, children develop the confidence to articulate their thoughts. Adults skilfully draw the children in when reading stories and they become engrossed in the tales. Using their forest craft skills, children construct their own investigations and imaginative play.

Leaders, including the governing body, are relentless in their drive and determination. Together, they overcome some of the challenges posed when working in a small school. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All members of staff and governors have had relevant safeguarding training. Staff are confident in recognising the signs of potential child abuse. They use the systems that are in place to report any concerns. These are swiftly dealt with by the designated safeguarding lead.

In the curriculum, pupils are taught how to identify risks both on and offline. Pupils learn how to contact the emergency services. They have basic first-aid training and know how to deal with minor injuries. Pupils take part in both road safety and water safety sessions.

## 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 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>	122289
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255850
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Gustav Macleod
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Lakey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ellingham.northumberland.sch.uk">www.ellingham.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a small school in a rural setting.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The school is a member of the Newcastle Diocese and has a Christian character.
- A section 48 inspection was carried out by the diocese in March 2019. The school was graded good.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders, class teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met also with representatives of the Diocese of Newcastle, Northumberland County Council and the local governing board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school. As well as speaking to parents at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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