

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

Mouldshaugh Lane, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 9PY

Inspection date: 11 July 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and achieve well. They appreciate the care shown to them by their teachers. Positive relationships exist between pupils and staff. As a result, pupils feel safe. Bullying is not an issue here. Pupils know that adults would deal with it quickly if it happened.

Many pupils behave very well. They are polite, well-mannered and confident. There are a few pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. While adults support them with this, not all adults have the same high expectations. Some pupils find the behaviour of others frustrating.

There are a range of opportunities for pupils to play an active role in the local community. For example, the school choir has sung at the community tea for elderly residents. Leaders also plan how to develop pupils' understanding of life beyond their school. There is a weekly global advocacy worship and pupils regularly discuss thought-provoking questions about current national and international news stories. At a picnic to celebrate the King's coronation, families brought dishes that represented their heritage to celebrate diversity. Pupils demonstrate respect for others. They are keen to embody the school's vision of 'loving, learning and living as we journey together'.

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

Since September 2022, leaders have made a number of changes to the school's curriculum. Subject leaders have thought carefully about how to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils. They have broken learning into small steps to help pupils achieve end goals. The curriculum is reflective of the school's context, for example pupils learn about Hadrian's Wall and Grace Darling. While leaders are clear about what they want pupils to learn, teachers' expectations of pupils are not consistently high. Sometimes, the tasks that teachers give to pupils are not ambitious enough. This means that pupils may not reach their full potential.

Leaders consider how the curriculum in the early years prepares children for Year 1. For example, in history, children in Reception learn the vocabulary associated with the past and look at photographs of artefacts from the past and the present. This helps them start to develop a sense of chronology. Children in early years benefit from positive, warm relationships with adults. Adults model effectively the language that they expect children to use.

Leaders have put systems in place to check what pupils know and remember. There are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. Pupils can talk about some of their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils could remember some of what they had learned about evolution in science when they were in Year 5.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively to learn the curriculum alongside their peers wherever possible. Targets on pupils' support plans are precise and measurable. The strategies that are listed on support plans can be seen in action in classrooms.

Learning to read is a priority in the school. In the early years, children enjoy listening to adults read stories to them. A new phonics programme is in place which starts in Reception. Leaders have invested heavily in training and resources for the programme, which has resulted in consistency in teaching. Pupils achieve well in phonics. Any pupils who are not keeping up with the programmes are supported to catch up. Leaders ensure that the most skilled staff teach the weakest readers. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they know. Pupils speak positively about reading. Adults encourage older pupils to choose ambitious texts to read, for example 'The Railway Children'.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive. While behaviour does not disrupt lessons, there are some instances where pupils are not fully engaged in their learning because teachers' expectations of them are not high enough. There is a new behaviour policy in place, but this is not securely embedded.

Pupils have opportunities to develop their talents and interests through extra-curricular clubs such as robotics, craft club and cricket. There have been several residential visits this year, for example to Lockerbie and London. These have enabled pupils to develop their teamwork skills and a sense of independence. Visits to a mosque and a synagogue have helped pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of different faiths.

Governors play an active role in school life. They are proud of the fact that the school is a key part of the local community. Governors are organised and knowledgeable. They understand their duties and perform them effectively. Staff report high levels of consideration for their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make robust checks on anyone who wishes to either work at or visit the school, to ensure that they are suitable to be around pupils. Staff and governors are suitably

trained in safeguarding. They know the signs to be aware of that may indicate that a pupil requires some support. Leaders engage the help of external agencies where appropriate. They are tenacious about following up concerns when they have not had a satisfactory response from them.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the school's curriculum for personal, social and health education. They can talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not consistently high. Some tasks are not sufficiently ambitious. There is variation in the quality of work that pupils produce. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently and that all teachers have high expectations so that pupils achieve their full potential.
- Leaders have written a new behaviour policy. However, this is not embedded. There is some variation in terms of expectations for behaviour across the school, both in lessons and at less-structured times. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the same high expectations of behaviour and that the behaviour policy is consistently applied.

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 June 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	122273
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10255892
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Murphy
Headteacher	Emma Lucas
Website	www.felton.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has nursery provision for three-year-old children.
- The school is a Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Newcastle and Durham. The most recent inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2018.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders, the chair and other members of the governing body, the challenge and support partner for the diocese and the school improvement lead from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, 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 considered how the school caters for pupils' wider development.
- Pupils were observed reading to familiar adults.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes was observed.
- Inspectors examined the single central record and looked at how safeguarding incidents are reported. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The responses made by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including any free-text comments, were considered as part of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Cook

His Majesty's Inspector

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