

# Inspection of Wylam First School

Bell Road, Wylam, Northumberland NE41 8EH

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Stephanie Gibbon. The school is part of the Cheviot Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officers (CEOs), Simon Taylor and Alice Witherow, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Carvin.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Wylam First School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

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

Wylam First School is at the heart of the community. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe. Pupils thrive working outdoors, for example when they visit the Wylam community orchard and the school's allotment.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. There has been careful thought given to the use of the outdoor environment. Pupils grow their own produce for a purpose. For example, for the harvest festival, pupils grow fruit, pick it and juice it ready to sell at the festival. The school is committed to being a sustainable school. 'Eco-warriors' ensure that pupils look after and value the environment.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show respect for each other and celebrate each other's individual differences. Pupils take an active role in the local community. For example, they perform at local churches and take part in events linked to the community orchard. Ensuring the physical and mental well-being of pupils is a priority of the school. A wide range of visits and visitors enhance the school's curriculum offer. Parents and carers are grateful for the extra educational opportunities their children receive.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and meets the needs of all pupils, including those pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have considered the important knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn from Nursery to Year 4. Leaders make the curriculum relevant and engaging for pupils. For example, pupils learn about the history of their local area. This stimulates pupils' interest in their learning. Teachers help pupils to recall and remember what they have been taught. Teachers use effective questioning to check what pupils know and can remember.

In the early years, the environment has been carefully considered to promote children's independence. Children settle well into the provision's routines. Children are engaged in their learning and develop high levels of concentration. They are highly motivated and are eager to join in with the activities that teachers design. Staff model language and communication purposefully. Children in early years are very well prepared for key stage 1.

Reading is a priority in school. Pupils begin to learn to read at the start of the Reception year. Daily phonics sessions are highly effective. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable. The books that pupils read are matched closely to their phonic knowledge. This helps them to develop fluency in reading. Pupils' love of reading is enhanced by visits to the local library. The school communicates well with parents about their children's progress in reading.

The trust has worked with school leaders to strengthen the provision for pupils with SEND. Clear plans of support set out how staff can help pupils with their next steps.

Staff skilfully adapt their teaching to meet the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Leader's high expectations of pupils' behaviour are shared by all staff. Pupils are safe in school. Adults listen to their concerns attentively and provide effective support when needed. Pupils are respectful to each other and the adults around them. Older pupils look after younger pupils carefully. They support them well at lunchtimes and during school events.

Leaders provide high-quality opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about fundamental British values in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons, assemblies and through the daily life of the school. Pupils vote for school councillors and 'eco-warriors' democratically. Pupils take these leadership roles seriously and are proud of the difference that they make to the life of the school and the wider world. Music, art and drama weeks enable pupils to explore the arts, working towards a final celebration for the local community.

In some subjects, the school is adept at checking the implementation of the curriculum. However, this is not consistent for all subjects. The school's understanding of the strengths and areas to further develop in some subjects is not as clear as in others.

Governors and trustees are committed to ensuring that all pupils have a high-quality education. Those responsible for governance are knowledgeable and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They check the effectiveness of leaders' actions to further improve the school. Leaders ensure that the workload and well-being of staff are considered. Staff feel well supported.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, the effectiveness of the checks on the implementation of the curriculum is variable. As a result, the identification of improvement priorities is stronger in some subjects than in others. The school should work to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the strengths and areas to further improve across all subjects.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146911
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242426
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Carvin
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Simon Taylor and Alice Witherow (Co-CEOs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Gibbon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wfs.cheviotlt.co.uk">www.wfs.cheviotlt.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Wylam First School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2019. The school is part of the Cheviot Learning Trust.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders and looked at curriculum plans and evidence for PSHE.
- Inspectors held a meeting with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss attendance and behaviour in school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke to five members of the local governing board, including the chair of the local governing board, a member of the board of trustees and the CEO. Inspectors also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing board and trust.
- Inspectors also visited daily story time.
- Inspectors spoke with early career teachers and their mentors.
- The lead inspector spoke to a group of parents and carers at the start of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Longstaff, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Westley

Ofsted Inspector

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