

# Inspection of a good school: Holy Trinity Church of England First School

Bell Tower Place, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 1NB

---

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 November 2023

## Outcome

Holy Trinity Church of England First School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision of creating 'inquisitive thinkers, challenge seekers and kind hearts' is embedded throughout the school community. Leaders and governors ensure that it is at the heart of the education they carefully plan for pupils. Pupils know that the delivery of school's vision helps them to be the best they can be. The aims and ambitions throughout the school are inclusive to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This inclusive approach starts with children in early years.

Pupils are proud to attend this welcoming school. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive. They enjoy their lessons and are eager to learn more. Pupils understand the differences between each other. Pupils are clear about how adults help them do well. The warm and caring relationships staff have for pupils help pupils feel safe. Pupils are happy here. They take pride in their work.

Leadership responsibilities for pupils help them become active citizens, contributing to the whole life of the school. Pupils across school benefit from these opportunities. For example, pupils enjoy being part of the 'digital leaders' team and the school council.

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

The school ensures that children start school positively. Children in early years benefit from a curriculum that is designed to give them the skills and knowledge to be successful as they move up through the school. Recent training for staff has strengthened the teaching of phonics. Leaders make sure pupils who need daily phonics input receive consistent teaching in line with the school's chosen phonics scheme. Children in early years make a prompt start to their phonics learning. They are focused and eager to use their sounds in lessons with confidence.

Older pupils enjoy reading a range of books. They talk about their favourite books and authors well. Some pupils do not have books that are well matched to their phonic

knowledge. This leads to some pupils having to sound out words too often and limits their fluency when reading.

The school has high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. In classrooms, staff make use of a range of resources to meet the needs of all pupils. In mathematics, for example, carefully chosen resources help all pupils to succeed. Pupils with SEND have focused targets, carefully matched to their areas of need. The school ensures advice from professionals for pupils with SEND is put into practice in the classroom. Where necessary, staff receive training to support pupils with SEND effectively.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that matches the intentions of the school's vision. The school ensures that this starts in the early years. Leaders have identified the knowledge and skills needed in the nursery year and in the reception year so that pupils do well. A clear structure to the mathematics curriculum helps pupils build their numerical understanding. Pupils articulate well how their mathematics learning is getting more challenging. For example, pupils in Year 3 know that they are working with larger numbers this year and using written methods of calculation with more confidence.

Pupils are clear about how staff support them to achieve. Leaders support staff to deliver the curriculum using small steps, so that pupils make progress. The school applies the same 'small step' approach to the wider curriculum, such as in computing. Elsewhere, pupils enjoy art lessons. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage with local artists and their artwork. However, the curriculum in art and design is less developed than in some subjects. The small steps identified for pupils to be successful are not as clear and are less well sequenced.

The school uses wider opportunities to enhance the curriculum. School visits add to the curriculum offer. Pupils develop an understanding of how food goes from the farm to their table. They learn to appreciate art through exhibitions at the local art gallery. The school is passionate about developing pupils' leadership skills. Pupils take part in public speaking through collective worship and whole school events. Leadership awards help pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 to raise money for charities of pupils' choice. The 'mini police' work within the local community allows pupils to represent the school at community events. Pupils are clear they are treated equally at school. Pupils talk about how everyone is welcome in school.

Governors contribute well to the vision for the school. They focus on working with leaders to strengthen the school's offer. They provide challenge to leaders and work with other stakeholders to ensure pupils get a high quality of education. Staff say leaders are considerate of workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The books that some pupils at the early stages of reading access are not consistently matched books to the phonics sounds they know. This means they are not building fluency and automaticity when reading because they have to sound out and blend too many words. The school should ensure that books are well matched to the sounds pupils know and remember, to further support pupils in becoming fluent readers.
- In some areas of the curriculum the sequence of lessons does not fully support the aims and ambitions of the curriculum. Where this happens, pupils do not benefit from well-ordered lessons that helps to builds up the small steps they need to be successful. The school should ensure that the learning is carefully sequenced and fully aligned to the intent of the curriculum so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills further.

## 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 March 2014.

## 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>	122282
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290113
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Teresa Catto
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas Shaw
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holytrinity.northumberland.sch.uk">www.holytrinity.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Church of England Diocese of Durham and Newcastle and has a Christian character.
- Its most recent section 48 inspection was in October 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school offers a daily breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- 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.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. The inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers and teaching assistants. They spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils at the early stages of reading with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at planning and met with leaders to discuss computing.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector gathered views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through a pupil survey and through pupil meetings.
- The inspector spoke with representatives from the governing body, the diocese and the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classes, at breakfast club and during breaks and at lunchtime.

## **Inspection team**

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023