

Inspection of a good school: Northern Primary School

Burnley Road, Bacup, Lancashire OL13 8PH

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 February 2024

Outcome

Northern Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small and friendly school where pupils are celebrated for their individuality. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils arrive at school happy and ready to learn. They are greeted warmly by staff and their friends each morning. This pleasant atmosphere continues throughout the school day. Pupils said that they can speak to a trusted adult if they have any concerns. They value their opinions being listened to.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, they are immersed in their learning. The school expects pupils to achieve well and many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do so.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils learn about different experiences in the wider world. For example, they learn about a range of different places of worship through their studies and by visiting them. Pupils can attend a wide range of clubs such as gardening and badminton. Many of the pupils take up this offer and discover new interests. Older pupils act as club captains to support staff and inspire younger pupils.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. It has considered what pupils should learn, starting in the early years and continuing to Year 6. Subject curriculums have been carefully designed to enable pupils to build on their previous learning. Most pupils learn well from the curriculum.

Typically, teachers present new concepts with clarity and they select appropriate activities to help pupils learn well. In many subjects, teachers have received appropriate training to ensure that they have a secure knowledge of the content of the curriculum. Occasionally, in some subjects, the activities that teachers choose to deliver the curriculum do not support pupils to learn as well as they could. This means that, in these subjects, some pupils carry forward gaps in their knowledge.

In the main, teachers check that pupils have understood and learned the most important information from each lesson. However, the school is still refining its approaches to assessment. Consequently, in a small number of subjects, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified or addressed quickly enough.

The school has prioritised the teaching of early reading. It has made sure that the staff who deliver the phonics curriculum are well trained. As soon as they join the Reception Year, children start to learn the sounds that letters make. They practise reading from books which contain the sounds that they have learned. When pupils struggle with reading, the school makes sure that they receive the help that they need to develop into confident and successful readers.

The school promotes a love of reading. It provides pupils with a diverse range of texts by different authors. The school enthuses younger pupils about books by encouraging them to vote for their class story. Older pupils inspire others through their role as 'reading buddies'.

Teachers quickly identify any additional needs that pupils may have. They then make any necessary adaptations to their teaching, including implementing advice from external professionals. This enables pupils with SEND to successfully access the same curriculum as their peers and to learn well.

Pupils understand the school rules and enjoy their positive behaviours being recognised. They follow clear routines, which enable them to move around the school sensibly and safely. This creates a sense of order and calm around the school.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a residential trip to develop their teamwork skills. Members of the local community are invited into school so that younger pupils can learn more about the roles different people have in keeping everyone safe. Pupils throughout the school learn about keeping mentally and physically healthy. The school places a strong focus on helping pupils learn about communities different to their own.

Governors understand the school's priorities. They have a range of expertise which helps them to support the school effectively. The staff that were spoken to were extremely positive about the school. They are proud to be members of the school community. Staff appreciate that their views are sought when changes are made to the curriculum. They said that the school is mindful of how any changes may impact on their workload.

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, a few of the activities that teachers choose to deliver the curriculum do not help pupils to learn as well as they could. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers receive appropriate support to develop their subject-specific knowledge and, consequently, to implement the curriculum as it is intended.
- In a small number of subjects, the school's approaches to checking on pupils' knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped. This means that, on occasion, teachers do not have sufficient information to assure themselves that pupils have understood key information and concepts. The school should develop assessment strategies that teachers can use with confidence and accuracy to ensure that any gaps in pupils' learning are identified and tackled quickly.

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 November 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' 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

Unique reference number	119190
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10313997
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cara Duffy
Headteacher	Rachel Tomlinson
Website	www.northern.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is currently led by an executive headteacher who has recently been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders in school. She also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, she held discussions about

the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to a range of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in other subjects and looked at documentation and samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector observed a range of pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector talked with pupils in meetings. She spoke to pupils during lessons and during lunch time.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection.
- No pupils or staff completed Ofsted's online surveys.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of school documents, including school policies, school improvement documents and a sample of documents for pupils with SEND. She also looked at minutes from local governing body meetings, information about pupils leaving and starting at the school and records relating to pupils' attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead 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' interest first.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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