

Inspection of Featherstone Purston St Thomas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

George Street, Featherstone, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF7 5BG

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The values of hope, love, respect and kindness are central to school life. Pupils welcome visitors to their school. Adults care about every pupil. There is a strong commitment to supporting pupils' emotional needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.

The school's ambition for every pupil to do well is not realised. This is reflected in the poor outcomes that pupils achieve at the end of key stage 2. In some subjects, pupils do not acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve well over time.

Pupils know when and how to report any concerns that they have. Behaviour in lessons and in the school building is usually calm. This is not the case consistently when pupils are outside at playtime and lunchtime. Some pupils say that they do not feel safe at these times.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and online safety. They understand racism and homophobia. However, this knowledge is not applied in school life consistently well. The actions and language used by some pupils is unkind towards others.

Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular clubs. They also take on positions of responsibility, including school councillors and reading ambassadors. Pupils understand their role and value the leadership skills that they are developing.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. However, curriculum developments are at an early stage. Many subject leaders are new to the role. They have had the training and support to carry out their role effectively. They use their subject knowledge to provide support for colleagues. In some subjects, such as mathematics and phonics, teachers and teaching assistants have had training to help them to teach the curriculum well. In other subjects, such as history and religious education (RE), the activities and resources provided by teachers are not matched well to the knowledge that pupils need to learn. There is more to do to ensure that curriculum content is taught consistently and effectively in all lessons.

Leaders know how well pupils are learning the curriculum in phonics and mathematics. The school's systems to check pupils' learning in the wider-curriculum subjects, such as history and physical education (PE), are not developed consistently. In these subjects, the school does not have a clear understanding of how well pupils are learning over time.

The phonics programme is taught consistently and effectively. The school ensures that pupils who need support with reading access phonics lessons daily. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to practise and apply their phonics knowledge when reading. Staff are well trained to provide

effective support for pupils who are not on track with reading. Pupils are given the support that they need to catch up quickly. There is more to do to develop the reading curriculum beyond phonics. The school has not identified precisely enough the important reading knowledge that pupils need to learn. Some older pupils are not able to read as confidently and fluently as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support that they need to access the full curriculum. The school has effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. The school ensures that adults who support pupils with SEND are well trained. However, the strategies that are used well in lessons are not identified consistently on support plans.

Leaders have implemented a new policy to improve pupils' behaviour. This is having a positive impact. During the inspection, leaders put immediate changes in place to make pupils' play much calmer and more purposeful. There is more to do to ensure that pupils' behaviour on the playground improves. Pupils' attendance across the school is too low. The systems in place to monitor attendance lack rigour. The high rates of persistent absence are not reducing quickly enough. Pupils miss out on important learning too often.

The personal development curriculum has recently changed. The curriculum has been carefully adapted to respond to the risks identified in the local community. For example, the local police community support officer introduces pupils to the importance of keeping safe through regular workshops. Pupils are less secure about how to apply this knowledge in the outside world.

Recently, the school has put plans in place to improve the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. Leaders, including governors, have a clear vision. They are committed to ensuring that the pupils at this school receive the high quality of education that they deserve. The school acknowledges that more improvement is needed. Although many parents and carers are positive about the work of the school, some say that communication between school and home could be better. Staff feel valued and part of a supportive team. Leaders take account of staff's workload and genuinely care about their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The activities and resources that teachers plan are not matched consistently to the knowledge that the school wants pupils to learn. This means that some pupils have gaps in their learning. The school should ensure that staff are given the

training and support that they need to select the resources and activities that will help pupils build their knowledge over time in each subject.

- Systems to check what pupils know and remember are not embedded in all subjects. This means that the school does not have a comprehensive understanding of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum in the wider-curriculum subjects. The school should ensure that staff use effective systems to check what pupils know, remember and can do.
- The school's new approach to reading is not fully embedded. Beyond phonics, the school has not identified the most important knowledge that it wants pupils to learn by the end of each year group. This means that some pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. The school should develop a clearly sequenced approach to teaching reading, beyond phonics, to ensure that all pupils learn to read confidently, fluently and accurately.
- The school does not have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour, during the more unstructured times of the school day. This means that some pupils do not feel safe consistently when they are playing outside. The school should ensure that all staff are trained to follow the agreed behaviour policy consistently so that behaviour improves further and all pupils feel safe.
- The procedures for analysing and monitoring attendance are not rigorous enough. This means that too many pupils do not attend school often enough and miss out on important learning. The school should review its systems for monitoring and responding to attendance concerns, ensuring there is a systematic approach to resolving attendance issues and making sure that pupils catch up on missed learning.

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	108249
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10297246
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair of the Interim Executive Board	Alan Richards
Headteacher	Cathryn Hampshire
Website	www.stthomasfeatherstone.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher, named in the report, was not present when inspectors visited the school.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since January 2024 and was in post at the time of the inspection.
- The school is a Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school uses one provider of 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 met with the acting headteacher, assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese. They also met with members of the interim executive board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, maths, history, PE and RE. 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 heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their views of the school, their learning, behaviour and safety.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils. They also took into account the views of parents and carers using Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including comments received via the free-text facility. Inspectors also talked to parents in the school playground.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Haunch	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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