

Inspection of a good school: Hugh Joicey Church of England First School, Ford

Ford Village, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2QA

Inspection date:

15 May 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils live by the school vision of 'Love one another, love learning, love nature'. They are friendly and caring to one another and try their best in lessons. They immerse themselves in the natural world in weekly forest school sessions.

Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. There is a family atmosphere in this very small school. Pupils feel safe and trust adults. Adults know pupils and their families very well. They respond sensitively to pupils' needs.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. A very few pupils struggle to manage their behaviour. Adults help them to remain calm so they can focus on their learning. Leaders deal with the very few instances of bullying promptly.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that enhance their personal development. They learn to persevere, to work together as a team and to solve problems. Pupils enjoy visits to local castles, for example, and these visits help to bring learning alive.

The school has experienced considerable staffing turbulence in recent years. This has hampered some of the school's curriculum development and has resulted in inconsistent pupil achievement over time. The school is already working to improve its curriculum, but there remains more to do. In some subjects, pupils' knowledge is superficial and pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

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

Pupils' achievement is not consistently good. It is stronger in some subjects than in others. For example, pupils achieve well in science. Pupils build their scientific knowledge

well over time. They can use accurate scientific vocabulary. In science, the intended subject content that pupils should be learning and when they should be learning it is carefully thought out. However, in some other subjects, such as history and geography, this is not the case. There is insufficient clarity about the sequence of the subject content that pupils should be taught and when they should be taught it. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge well over time and have some gaps in their knowledge.

Children settle quickly into the early years. Their transition from pre-school is carefully managed. Suitable resources help children to explore and investigate. The development of children's communication and language skills is given high priority. In the early years, a clear and structured approach has been established to develop children's writing skills. Children learn to write using correct punctuation, for example. However, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are not built on effectively as pupils move through key stages 1 and 2.

The school has ensured that a clearly structured phonics programme is in place. Teachers follow a detailed curriculum to teach phonics. Pupils' phonics knowledge builds up well in small steps. Teachers use their assessments of pupils' learning to make sure that pupils read books that allow them to practise reading words containing the sounds they know. However, once pupils can read sounds, their progress in reading slows. Pupils read books that contain too many unfamiliar words. This hampers their ability to become confident and fluent readers.

In mathematics, recent revisions to develop the curriculum are starting to pay off. Pupils' achievement is improving. For example, pupils are given more opportunities to solve more complex mathematical problems. Pupils say their work now makes them think harder. They can use mathematical vocabulary more accurately. Even so, as in other subjects, further work is needed to plug gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they build their mathematical knowledge well over time.

Pupils respond well to adults' enthusiasm and encouragement. Pupils join in lessons and try their best. Adults' expectations are high for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive tailored support to help them achieve as well as other pupils. For example, pupils with SEND use the same scientific vocabulary as their classmates.

Overall, pupils' personal development is well supported. A good range of opportunities develops pupils' resilience, cooperative skills and teamwork. Regular outdoor learning helps pupils to reflect on nature. Close ties with the local church support pupils to consider important questions and to think about right and wrong. Pupils' understanding of their heritage is enhanced during visits to the local areas. As in some other subjects, however, the personal, social and health education curriculum requires further development to deepen pupils' knowledge in some aspects of their learning, in preparation for their next stage of education.

Leaders, including governors, care deeply about the school. They are proud that it is at the heart of the community. Careful strategic planning has steered the school through a difficult time. The new headteacher has already accurately identified, and set about

addressing, curriculum weaknesses. Staff appreciate that they are consulted about new developments. This includes reducing their workload, which has increased in recent times.

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 sequencing of pupils' learning is not clearly mapped out. Expectations of what should be taught and when are, therefore, unclear. This means that pupils are not supported effectively in order to build their knowledge well over time. The school should ensure that the curriculum pinpoints precisely what pupils should know and when and ensure that teachers are given the support they need to deliver the curriculum well in all subjects.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2019.

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 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	122291
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10320370
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Keith Gribbin and Adele Pearson-Atkinson
Headteacher	Chris Roberts
Website	www.ford.northumberland.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for 23 days.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- A separately registered pre-school shares the school site.
- The school is of a Church of England religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2016.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the governing body, and they spoke to a representative from the Church of England diocese on the telephone and met with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. In doing so, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also evaluated the quality of education in geography and history.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum in the early years as well as the curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke with a sample of parents. Inspectors also considered responses to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

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