

# Inspection of a good school: St John's Chapel Primary School

Burnfoot, St John's Chapel, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 1QH

---

Inspection dates:

4 June 2024

## Outcome

St John's Chapel Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

St John's Chapel Primary School is a smaller-than-average-size primary school. There are warm relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils benefit from the highly nurturing and welcoming environment in school. Their individual talents and uniqueness are celebrated.

Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes that spread across the two key stages. This is well managed. The school is part of a federation with other local small schools. Pupils from each school join together for aspects of their learning, educational visits and residential visits. This helps pupils widen their friendships and experiences. This prepares them well for their secondary education.

Pupils behave well. They are motivated by the rewards in school and celebration assemblies. The school's systems to promote good attendance work well. Pupils and families know it is important to attend school regularly and on time. Pupils benefit from the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer. Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the education and support that their children receive.

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

The school has introduced an ambitious curriculum. Teachers benefit from expertise and shared resources across the federation of schools. This helps lessons to be well sequenced and engaging. Pupils understand the expectations in lessons. They are keen to do well. Pupils work together positively right from the early years. Pupils show independence in their mixed-age classes, which helps lessons run smoothly. The sequenced curriculum supports pupils to work towards their year group expectations. However, in some subjects, curriculum coverage is not substantial enough. The school does not provide enough time for pupils to cover some topics with enough depth. This means that some pupils are not achieving as well as they could be in some subjects.

The school has an ambitious curriculum for the teaching of reading. Staff are well trained to teach children how to read. The rigorous approach to reading means that children learn to read with fluency and confidence. Pupils needing additional support benefit from the small group teaching and additional resources provided by the school. Pupils love to read at St John's Chapel Primary School. The school has carefully considered ways to develop a love of reading. The school's partnership with the local lending library widens the range of books that pupils have access to. They read at home often. They enthusiastically discuss the books they have shared together. This develops their confidence. Pupils also read books that help them to learn more about the topics they are learning about.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the well-planned support provided by the school. Pupils' emotional well-being and broader development are well considered. The school provides a bespoke curriculum for those pupils who need it. Most pupils benefit from precise strategies to support them in lessons and around school. However, in some subjects, pupils with SEND are not keeping up with their peers. In these subjects, the school is developing its systems to ensure that all pupils can work towards age-related expectations.

Children make a great start in the early years. Children benefit from the ambitious learning environment. Staff have clearly considered the learning that underpins all activities. Children play and work together well. They use taught vocabulary when speaking to each other. The environment develops children's curiosity and independence. Children are taught to recognise and talk about their feelings as part of the daily routine. They build positive relationships with older pupils in the school. This develops their sense of belonging.

There are clear expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and when moving around school. The mixed-age classes and shared playground area facilitate nurturing friendships. Pupils discuss the various ways that they can include each other in games and activities. Bullying is not an issue. Pupils are confident that they can share worries and concerns with teachers.

The school has carefully considered the broader development of pupils. The school develops pupils' character and cultural capital well. Dedicated time in assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons encourages pupils to discuss current events. Pupils are well prepared for life locally and beyond. Pupils have an understanding of justice and equality.

Governors are committed to the leadership of the school. Their expertise adds to the strength of the federation. They maintain an accurate picture of the school and are well aware of their statutory duties. The school collaborates across the federation to develop the curriculum offer and create wider opportunities for pupils. Staff expertise is allocated well. The support across the federation has helped to reduce staff 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 mathematics, the work given to pupils does not enable them to achieve the aims and ambitions of the curriculum. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that their systems and curriculum coverage for this subject allow enough time for pupils to improve their skills and deepen their understanding.
- Sometimes, pupils who need help to catch up, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not receive enough support. This means that some pupils do not have a chance to catch up to their peers. The school should ensure its systems support pupils to achieve age-related expectations.

## 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 March 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 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>	114064
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10320358
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	29
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mark den Hollander
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Hodgkinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-johnschapel.durham.sch.uk">www.st-johnschapel.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St John's Chapel Primary School is part of the Durham Dales Federation.
- This is a much smaller-than-average-size school. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. Children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 are taught together. There is a key stage 2 class comprising pupils from Years 3 to 6.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including members of the governing body and the

local authority school leadership adviser.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and design and technology. 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 listened to pupils read from different year groups.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, governors 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 analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They reviewed the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Carr

Ofsted 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 2024