

Inspection of a good school: Heworth Church of England Primary School

53 Heworth Road, York, North Yorkshire YO31 0AA

Inspection date:

12 June 2024

Outcome

Heworth Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Simon White. This school is part of the Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrew Daly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Hattam.

What is it like to attend this school?

This small school has a big heart, seamlessly integrated into a larger community with a shared vision for every child to flourish academically, spiritually and culturally. The values of 'courage, perseverance, respect and compassion' thread through every aspect of the school's work. Pupils understand and embody these values, supporting each other to meet them. Pupils and staff talk about the 'family feel' that there is here, creating a happy and welcoming environment.

Most pupils display high standards of behaviour and listen attentively to their teachers. On the rare occasions that there is bullying, staff act quickly to help pupils. Pupils are confident to share concerns they have with staff. They know that these trusted adults will look after them.

Pupils benefit from the curriculum and wider opportunities that the school provides for them. Educational trips and visits from different community members and professionals bring learning to life for pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests through extra-curricular clubs. Leadership opportunities, such as being a member of the school council, a library monitor or worship leader, further enhance pupils' school experience.

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

Children in the early years are immersed in language as soon as they start school. They sit neatly on the carpet and enthusiastically do 'robot arms' as they learn the sounds that different letters make and how to blend those into words. Teachers skilfully use the provision to ensure that children gain the knowledge and experience they need to be ready for Year 1. Some children, including older pupils, receive support to help them read with greater proficiency. Well-trained staff help these pupils to read with increasing accuracy and confidence. Support for early reading is a strength of the school.

In many subjects, the important knowledge that the school wants pupils to be able to know and remember has been carefully considered. Teaching staff build on what pupils have previously learned, seamlessly connecting it to new concepts. With a strong grasp of their subjects, teachers provide clear explanations and regularly check pupils' understanding, adjusting their approach as needed.

In most subjects, pupils have regular opportunities to revisit this important knowledge over time. This helps them to remember what they have been taught and apply it to new learning. Where all of this is consistently in place, pupils are able to recall what they have been taught before. While some curriculum areas are still being developed, the school is taking the right steps to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well across all subjects.

The school recognises that some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), require additional support. Pupils with an education, health and care plan receive the help they need to achieve their targets and access the curriculum alongside their peers. However, the support for some other pupils with additional needs, including some with SEND, lacks clarity. As a result, teaching staff sometimes do not have sufficient information on how to best help these pupils. Governors have correctly identified this as an area needing further improvement. They are working to ensure stronger strategic oversight so that all pupils receive the help they need.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and seeing their friends. They are well supported by caring staff who know them well. Older pupils enjoy being 'buddies' to the youngest children in Class 1. This contributes to the kind and supportive environment that exists here. Pupils learn the importance of being respectful and tolerant citizens in modern Britain. This aligns with the school's values. Consequently, the school is a place where most pupils meet the high expectations for their behaviour. While a few pupils express concerns about occasional unkindness, they trust that that staff will respond promptly and effectively.

Staff are well supported and value the opportunities for training and development they have through the trust. Staff consider leaders to have their best interests at heart. Leaders address any concerns raised about staff workload and well-being. Governors and senior leaders within the trust are knowledgeable and committed to the school. However, their effectiveness in holding leaders to account is hindered by a lack of clarity regarding the school's key improvement priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are currently improving safeguarding documents and records to ensure that they give sufficient detail of the actions that have been taken to ensure pupils' well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support plans for pupils with additional needs, including some who have SEND, are not consistently precise. As a result, teaching staff do not always have the information they need to best help these pupils overcome the challenges they face. The school should ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are clearly identified, and that teaching staff have the information, knowledge and support they need to help all pupils learn well.
- There is a lack of clarity regarding the school's key improvement priorities and the steps intended to achieve them. This hinders the effectiveness of strategic leaders in both supporting and holding the school accountable for improvement. The school and the trust should ensure that key improvement priorities and corresponding strategies are clearly defined, communicated to relevant stakeholders, and regularly reviewed and updated to further support continuous improvement.

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 predecessor school, Heworth Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

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	142845
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10346586
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Hattam
Headteacher	Simon White
Website	www.heworth.york.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust.
- The school has a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was in May 2017. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, section 48 inspections were suspended and the inspection window was extended by up to eight years.
- Since the last inspection, some new leadership appointments have been made. A new headteacher has taken up post and new governors have been appointed.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

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 senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and other governors, and with a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector met with the trust's chief executive officer. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the Diocese of York.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector listened to some pupils read. Inspectors also reviewed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 the views of parents and carers through their responses to Ofsted Parent View and through discussions with some parents as they brought their child to school. Telephone conversations were held with some parents. Inspectors considered the views of pupils through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and through meetings held with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings and informal discussions.

Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Ngenda

Ofsted Inspector

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