

Inspection of a good school: Walton & Lees Hill Church of England School

Lees Hill, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 2BB

Inspection dates:

11 December 2019

Outcome

Walton & Lees Hill Church of England School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Walton & Lees Hill Church of England Primary School is a happy school. Pupils say that they love 'to meet up with friends to learn'. There is a strong climate for learning right across this school.

Staff foster pupils' independence and confidence. Pupils like to try new things. They are happy to do this because they feel very safe. Pupils know that staff care about them and will always help them if they need it.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. As this is a small school, staff and pupils know each other very well. Teachers are skilful in using the wide variety of information that they have about pupils. This ensures that pupils achieve their very best. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They particularly like it when trips and activities bring learning to life. For example, pupils enjoyed the trip to Beamish to experience life as a Victorian.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and caring towards each other. We saw how pupils were quick to open a door for adults or their classmates. They are delighted when there is recognition of their considerate behaviour.

Many pupils and parents said that school is 'like one big family'. We saw lots of examples of older pupils helping and supporting younger pupils. For example, older pupils held younger pupils' hands as they walked through school, or they listened to them read.

Pupils said that staff deal with any incidents of bullying effectively.

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

Leaders are clear and confident about the curriculum that they have chosen to offer pupils. They are knowledgeable about what should be taught. Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which to teach topics and concepts. The curriculum is particularly well planned in English, mathematics, history, geography and science. Leaders

are determined to continue to develop the curriculum in other subjects, such as art and information and communication technology (ICT), so that they are of a similar standard.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They help pupils to see connections in their learning and to build their understanding. This helps pupils to remember important information. For example, in history, pupils have learned about the Victorians. They are now building on this knowledge to understand how the Victorians have influenced aspects of modern-day life such as Christmas traditions.

Teachers explain things clearly to pupils and are quick to help if a pupil does not understand. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to go over the information that they have previously learned. Pupils are also given time to practise new skills. This is helping to ensure that pupils learn well and retain knowledge over time.

In mathematics, pupils enjoy using what they know to help them solve mathematical problems. They also like applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to practical activities. For example, pupils worked out how best to invest a small amount of money to make even more money for a charity.

There is a celebration of books and reading throughout the school. Children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 relish regularly hearing an adult share a story with them. Key stage 2 pupils say that they enjoy reading. They particularly like the reading challenges that they are set. There is a rich supply of books in the school. Teachers use stories to spark pupils' imagination and to enable pupils to try out different ways of writing.

Children learn letters and sounds as soon as they start in Nursery. Most of the curriculum is well planned in early years. Staff in early years are focusing on developing a love of reading in the children. They offer ideas and workshops for parents and carers to continue reading development at home. However, some staff in early years and key stage 1 do not have sufficient specialist knowledge of the teaching of early reading.

Leaders in key stages 1 and 2, however, are experts in English. They ensure that most pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and achieve well in reading at the end of Year 2.

Leaders and staff are committed to all pupils achieving their very best. They are quick to notice and help if a pupil is struggling. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those that are disadvantaged, have their needs met successfully. Leaders ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities as all other pupils in school. These opportunities help them achieve all that they are capable of during their time at school.

Pupils behave well in school. They are enthusiastic about school life and enjoy being with their friends. Children in early years learn to share and take turns. Older pupils play and work cooperatively. They listen carefully in lessons. Pupils could not recall any incidents of bullying, but said that if it did occur, adults would deal with it quickly.

Staff offer pupils a good range of after-school clubs. Pupils were very enthusiastic to tell

us about the extensive outdoor activities that they do, such as kayaking and mountain walking. They particularly like the opportunity to meet pupils from other local schools during these activities.

The leadership team is highly committed to the school. It has worked very hard to keep the school running smoothly following changes to senior leadership in July 2019. Governors are similarly dedicated to the school. They are seeking to finalise the future leadership and staffing arrangements as soon as possible. Governors recognise that further work is required to assess the additional pressure being placed on staff in a small school during this transition period. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a caring and nurturing ethos in the school. Staff are adept at keeping pupils safe. The safeguarding and protection of pupils are important to them. They make sure that all their policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows them in detail.

Leaders work well with other agencies to support pupils and families. Adults make sure that pupils and their families are well looked after and supported. They act quickly if they have concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- School leaders have a good level of expertise in teaching the English curriculum. However, some staff do not. Leaders should ensure that all staff who teach in early years and key stage 1 have sufficient specialist knowledge of early reading. This will ensure that pupils become fluent readers more quickly.
- The majority of curriculum subjects are planned and delivered to a high standard. Some subjects, such as art and ICT, are less well developed than others. Leaders need to develop these subjects further so that all the curriculum areas are planned and delivered to the same high standard. This will ensure that pupils' achievement improves further across all curriculum areas.
- The recent changes in leadership and staffing are unsettling and they are adding additional pressure on the school. This is adding extra workload on staff. Governors need to explore more strategies to support staff so that a healthy level of workload can be maintained. This will further support staff's health and well-being.

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/outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	112256
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10111076
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mary Alston
Headteacher	Fiona Stobbart (acting)
Website	www.leeshillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2016

Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher left at the end of the summer term 2019. One of the senior teachers in school has taken on the role of acting headteacher on a temporary basis.
- A newly qualified teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract to cover the early years and key stage 1 class.
- The local authority and governing body have appointed an experienced headteacher from a neighbouring local school to offer regular support to the acting headteacher and the school as needed.
- This Church of England school is voluntary controlled. It last received a religious education inspection carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2016.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. We spoke with the acting headteacher, the lead teacher and the newly qualified teacher. We also held discussions with staff that focused on

safeguarding.

- I spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and we considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- We also considered six responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I talked with pupils about the books that they like to read.
- We looked in detail at reading, mathematics and history. For each of these subjects, we held discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked with pupils. I also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Capron

Ofsted Inspector

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