

Inspection of a good school: Higher Walton Church of England Primary School

Higher Walton C of E Primary School, Rosewood Avenue, Higher Walton, Preston, Lancashire PR5 4FE

Inspection date:

8 June 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They explained that school is a happy place to play and learn. Pupils feel safe and value the strong friendships that they make.

Pupils play happily with each other on the playground. They understand what bullying is and said that it rarely happens. They are confident that adults will listen if they report bullying and make it stop quickly.

Expectations of pupils' behaviour differs from class to class. In lessons, some teachers do not consistently apply strategies to manage pupils' behaviour well. Some pupils lose focus and distract others. Several pupils expressed their concerns about this behaviour to inspectors.

Pupils achieve well in some subjects due to leaders' high expectations. However, pupils do not develop enough knowledge in all subjects because the curriculum is not sufficiently thought through. Pupils in key stage 1 do not learn to read as well as they should.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of clubs, competitions and trips. For example, pupils talked to inspectors excitedly about the jubilee celebrations and a recent trip to a local museum to learn about the Vikings. Older pupils have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, such as school prefects and being buddies to younger children.

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

Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. In some subjects, leaders have considered the essential knowledge that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should learn and the order in which they should learn it. For example, in mathematics, pupils develop their knowledge in a logical order. This helps pupils, and children in the early years, to achieve well in these subjects. However in other subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is at an early stage. In these subjects, teachers do not know the essential knowledge that pupils are expected to learn and the order in which this new knowledge must be taught. As a result, pupils' progress through the curriculum is variable.

Some subject leaders are new to their role and do not have a sufficiently detailed knowledge about the subjects they lead. This hinders their ability to further develop the curriculum and offer support to teachers to plan appropriate activities that build new knowledge on what pupils already know. In these subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, teachers use well-thought-out questions to check what pupils know and remember from their previous learning. Teachers use this information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to inform future teaching.

Children in the early years get off to a great start with their reading. Children quickly learn the sounds that letters make. They learn how to blend sounds together to make simple words. If children fall behind, support is provided so that they can catch up quickly. However, in key stage 1, this is not the case. Pupils have fallen behind with their reading. While appropriate support is now in place to help these pupils catch up, leaders have been slow to identify the problem and implement actions to sort it out. Leaders' actions have been further hampered by high levels of absence due to COVID-19. Some staff lack the confidence and competence to deliver the phonics programme well. Occasionally, pupils read books that are too difficult and not matched closely to the sounds that they know. Consequently, some pupils in key stage 1 do not read as fluently as they should.

Older children read well. They develop a love of reading and enjoy the work of a wide range of authors. They develop their comprehension skills through carefully chosen texts and well-planned activities. The majority of pupils, including those with SEND, make good progress with their reading across key stage 2.

Leaders identify effectively the additional needs of pupils with SEND as early as possible. Across the school, staff provide personalised support for this group of pupils. Skilled teachers provide appropriate and tailored support so that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Most pupils behave well in class. They get on with their learning without distraction. In some classes, pupils are not sure of teachers' expectations and occasionally lose focus. This interrupts the work of others. Pupils who spoke to inspectors described how this has a negative impact on their learning.

Leaders ensure that pupils have rich opportunities to broaden their horizons. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They visit the local church and celebrate a range of religious festivals. Pupils enjoy meeting people of different faiths who regularly visit the school. These experiences prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Governors are supportive of the school. Governors and leaders consider staff workload and well-being when making decisions. Staff feel respected and valued in school. However, they raised some concerns about their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that design and technology and science may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained to spot pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders have effective systems for reporting concerns. They respond quickly to concerns and where necessary seek the support of external agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families get the help that they need. All staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when working online. They understand the potential dangers of misusing social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order that they want them to learn it. This hampers teachers to design activities that support pupils to build on what they already know. Leaders should further develop the curriculum in these subjects to ensure that it is clear what pupils should be learning and when. This will help pupils to build more confidently on their prior knowledge.
- Some subject leaders are new to their role and do not have the necessary expertise to check how effective their curriculum is. This means that, at times, teachers do not deliver the curriculum as intended. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive training and support so that they can plan the curriculum in their subject more effectively and support other staff to deliver it well.
- Some pupils in key stage 1 do not read as fluently as they should. This limits their ability to access other areas of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive training to deliver the phonics programme well. Leaders should also ensure that the books that pupils use to practise their reading closely match the sounds that they already know.

- Some staff do not apply the strategies to manage pupils' low-level behaviour as well as they should. This means that some pupils lose concentration and disturb the learning of others. Leaders should ensure that staff receive support to manage pupils' behaviour effectively.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

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.

If you are the school and 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	119393
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226100
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	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katherine Pugh and Denise Sanderson
Headteacher	Joy Headley
Website	www.walton.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Blackburn, in September 2019.
- The school uses one registered provider of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector met virtually with five governors, including the two co-chairs of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with the school improvement adviser linked to the Diocese of Blackburn.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of safeguarding documentation and records of leaders' work to keep pupils safe. They spoke with staff to gauge how well they

understood their safeguarding duties. Inspectors also spoke with staff to gather their views about their workload and well-being.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtime. They spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views about behaviour and safeguarding in the school. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers to gather their opinions about the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work. Inspectors observed children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1 read to trusted adults.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Garry White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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