

Inspection of Harbottle Church of England First School

Harbottle, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 7DG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Nikki Buckley-Feiven. This school is part of Cheviot Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officers, Simon Taylor and Alice Witherow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Carvin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Harbottle Church of England First School is at the heart of the village community it serves. Every part of the school community plays an important part in this small rural school. The school feels like a family. Pupils say it is a welcoming school. It is!

Pupils rise to meet the high expectations staff have of them. Pupils are keen to learn and achieve well. The school wants pupils to know about where they live and the wider world. The curriculum is carefully built around these aims.

Pupils are proud to be part of the Harbottle family. They feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree that this school supports their children well. Pupils behave well. Older pupils set a good example to younger pupils around school.

The school prioritises opportunities beyond the classroom. Carefully chosen trips bring the curriculum to life for pupils. Pupils also explore the wider world by visiting cities. Opportunities to present to other schools helps pupils with public speaking and share their understanding about sustainability. Pupils have an eco-code for everyone in school to follow. Pupils are using resources that they have chosen to help improve and understand the local environment.

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

The school has shaped a curriculum that prepares pupils well for their next stages of learning. It is crafted so that, from the start of early years, pupils build up knowledge step by step. Reading is a high priority. Children make a prompt start to reading in early years. They are keen to read the sounds they already know with confidence. Older pupils read using the sounds they know too. Staff support pupils to apply phonic strategies to unfamiliar words. This helps pupils to become fluent readers who read with expression. If pupils need more support with their reading, they receive it promptly. This helps them catch up. Stories in early years help children know the key language they need in the other areas of learning. Pupils talk about books that they have previously read in class with clarity and enthusiasm.

Teachers use assessment well to make checks on what pupils know and remember. Leaders and staff know pupils well and this helps teachers give extra support to pupils if they need it quickly. Leaders have organised the mathematics curriculum effectively. Pupils have opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical understanding. Children in early years show focus when learning about number.

The school has carefully sequenced the geography curriculum. The curriculum makes purposeful links to the local area and beyond. Children in early years learn about their homes. This progresses to understanding the features of the village for pupils in key stage 1. Older pupils know about the wider world. They remember key locational knowledge accurately. Pupils recall previous topics on rainforests well.

In science, the sequencing of the curriculum helps pupils build on previous learning

in purposeful ways. Pupils use scientific terms accurately and with understanding. In some parts of the curriculum, the school needs to make sure that the work is well matched to year group expectations consistently so that pupils deepen their understanding and learning time is not lost.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in school. Quick referrals to other professionals help support pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND work alongside their peers well. They access the same curriculum and do well.

The school values, which include teamwork and hope, flow through school life. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Given the small class sizes, pupils spend a lot of time together. Older pupils say they can fall out on occasions but adults help to sort this out. Lunch is chance to socialise across school. Pupils sit with their peers from all year groups where they chat and engage with each other well.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out set of opportunities to support their wider development. Pupils work together with local schools on sporting events and shared presentations on climate change. Leaders link school visits to the curriculum. Visits give pupils the chance to experience the coast or a city to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop a mature understanding of respect and equality in an age-appropriate way. Leadership responsibilities start in early years where children take care of their outdoor learning areas each week together.

Leaders and those responsible for governance share the same vision for the school and its pupils. There is an effective network for leaders to draw upon for additional support. There is a clear focus on making sure the school access appropriate training to maintain high expectations. Staff are proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has the correct procedures in place to keep pupils safe. Adults know how to report any concerns. Where necessary, leaders refer to the correct agencies to keep pupils safe. Record-keeping is not kept in an orderly way. It is difficult to see the actions the school has taken to keep pupils safe. The school recognises this. The school is developing a central system to keep records together. Staff and stakeholders receive regular and timely safeguarding training.

Leaders complete appropriate checks to make sure adults working in school are suitable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Records and information relating to safeguarding are not kept in an orderly and clear way. It is not always evident what actions the school has taken to keep pupils safe. The school must develop record-keeping so that all actions taken by the school to keep pupils safe are recorded in a clear and chronological way.
- The implementation of the curriculum is not consistent in meeting the different needs in some mixed-age classes. Pupils are not consistently given the opportunity to deepen or extend their learning and sometimes learning time is lost. The school must further develop some aspects of the curriculum to ensure that there are enough opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning.

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	145638
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10255642
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Carvin
Headteacher	Nikki Buckley-Feiven
Website	www.harbottle.northumberland.sch.uk/
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Cheviot Learning Trust.
- The school is a member of the Church of England Diocese of Durham and Newcastle and has a Christian character.
- Its most recent section 48 inspection was in January 2020. The school was judged good. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within five school years.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school offers after-school wraparound care two days a week.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to staff. They spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils at the early stages of reading with a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at planning and met with leaders to discuss history.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 gathered views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, through the free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through pupil meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the board of trustees, the local governing body, the trust and the diocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes, during breaks and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Malcolm Kirtley

His Majesty's Inspector

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