

Inspection of a good school: Heddon-on-the-Wall, St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Trajan Walk, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland NE15 0BJ

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 June 2023

Outcome

Heddon-on-the-Wall, St Andrew's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' pride in their school is typified by their excitement about the new history timeline in the main corridor, ending with the 60th anniversary of the school. Pupils sang 96 songs in 45 minutes during the celebration. Teachers expect a lot from pupils and they get it. Warm and caring relationships are a key feature of the school. Pupils love seeing their friends. They trust them to raise a worry with an adult on their behalf, if needed.

Pupils feel safe because of their trust in friends and adults. Older pupils make friends with younger pupils, playing with them and helping them. Misbehaviour is exceptionally rare. Records show that bullying is also equally rare. Leaders take swift action to address any incidents that do occur.

At breaktimes, pupils can use many special areas and equipment to build dens, play board games, use small toys or compete in sports. Pupils have ownership of these areas. They discuss them in the weekly 'outdoor play and learning' class assemblies. All pupils vote on the following week's sports focus, such as rounders or cricket. Pupils enjoy the 'innovative challenges'. These include working out ways to shelter from the sun or building an obstacle course with eight actions using 'loose' objects.

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

The curriculum interests and enthuses pupils. Pupils enjoy learning, so they try hard and behave well. In most subjects, such as mathematics and history, key themes link learning. The knowledge that pupils must retain is crystal clear. 'Big ideas' develop pupils' ability to use and apply what they know. New learning builds on what pupils have learned. Teachers plan lessons so that the sequence of knowledge that pupils acquire builds progressively. Teachers make checks during lessons to identify any gaps or misunderstandings in pupils' knowledge. More formal checks clarify what pupils have

remembered over time. Senior leaders and trust improvement partners regularly review and ratify the curriculum's effectiveness. Some foundation subjects, such as physical education (PE) and computing, are not as well developed as others.

Reading is a high priority for leaders. Children start to learn the sounds that letters make in Nursery. Phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1 follow the same structure and routines. Teachers and teaching assistants model effectively for pupils how to make sounds. Children in Reception read harder words by blending sounds. The books that pupils use to practise reading match their phonic knowledge and interest level. Leaders develop pupils' love of reading with activities such as visits from authors and the half-termly reading raffle. Pupils are quickly becoming skilled readers, reading fluently by sight and using expression.

All pupils access the full curriculum, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use different strategies to adapt learning in each subject. These include breaking down learning into very small steps for pupils with SEND. Teachers use clear and concise language to aid pupils' understanding. Pupils with SEND learn important vocabulary before a new unit of work. Adults provide additional help, including assistive technology or physical support such as reading rulers, coloured screens or 'therapy putty'. Leaders are determined that pupils with SEND will thrive.

Children in the early years know the routines and respond to adults' high expectations. Leaders provide a high-quality learning environment that is calm, orderly and inviting. It promotes curiosity and allows children to learn and have fun. The staff team works together to plan activities that are matched to children's needs and interests.

Leaders provide a myriad of planned opportunities to support pupils' wider development. Pupils learn to become sensible, grounded young people who show respect. They learn to care for the environment and play a role in the local community, such as tending the village flower beds. Pupils develop a good understanding of their own mental health and well-being. They begin to manage and share their feelings. Pupils have the choice of many after-school clubs. They can volunteer to be play rangers, music ambassadors or to be part of the school council. The school's Christian ethos is highly valued. Pupils discuss the importance of love and accepting people for who they are in Pride Month and Rainbow Day. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to explore the beauty of the local area, its cultural heritage and to make trips abroad.

Teachers enjoy working at the school. They describe it as a 'positive place' where all work well as a team. Leaders check on teachers' workload and consider ways of reducing it. Staff feel trusted and respected. Leaders listen and are approachable. Trust directors work alongside local academy committee members to support leaders with school improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff have a 'it could happen here' mentality. Staff training ensures that all adults know what to look for and how to report any concerns. Staff are aware of specific local safeguarding issues. Leaders act swiftly to take decisive action on every concern. A trained member of staff is available for pupils and families to talk to when needed.

Leaders use external safeguarding partners to help pupils and make checks on systems and records. Pupils learn how to stay safe online. They learn road safety and how to stay safe when riding a bike.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some foundation subjects, such as PE and computing, is not as well structured or mapped out as it is in other subjects within the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember is identified clearly for staff and that the key ideas that link learning are clarified so that pupils can learn equally well across all subjects.

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 predecessor school, Heddon-on-the-Wall St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, to be good in May 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](#)' 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	145782
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10268459
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust board	Gerry Miller
Headteacher	Andrew Wheatley
Website	www.heddon-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school's religious character is Christian. The diocese inspects this separately under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017, when the school was judged to be outstanding. Section 48 inspections are currently scheduled within eight years of the previous inspection. This cycle has been extended to allow for the period when inspections were paused due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The school converted to become an academy school in January 2019. When its predecessor school, Heddon-on-the-Wall, St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Pele multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, the designated safeguarding leads, the early years leader and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. Meetings were also held with teachers and the school business manager.
- The inspector met with two members of the local academy committee and two trust board directors alongside the chief operating officer.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspector looked at curriculum documents and spoke to leaders about a range of curriculum subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at breaktime and at lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour. A group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of staff recruitment and vetting checks. He looked at documents and records relating to safeguarding. The inspector spoke to leaders, school staff, trust staff and directors, school academy councillors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. He also noted pupils' views given via Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- The inspector considered the well-being and workload of staff. He took note of the responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey, including comments made by staff about their well-being.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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