

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

The Green, Pickhill, Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 4JL

Inspection date:

10 November 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pickhill Church of England Primary School is a nurturing and caring school. Pupils thrive as part of the 'Pickhill family'. Pupils are proud of their local area and community. The school extends pupils' curiosity and respect of the wider world. They have a well-developed understanding of fairness and equality.

The school has high ambitions for every pupil. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive highly effective support. Pupils achieve well. The curriculum prepares pupils sufficiently for their next stage of learning. Pupils exhibit positive behaviour throughout the school day. The behaviour systems in school encourage pupils 'to be the best that you can be'.

The school's partnership with the local church provides opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community and beyond. Leaders provide a range of regular opportunities to promote pupils' moral and spiritual development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff know pupils extremely well and cultivate a sense of belonging for every pupil. Pupils are happy and safe.

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

Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. The clearly defined and well-equipped classroom fosters a passion for learning. Staff encourage children to use their imaginations and make learning memorable. For example, children used craft resources to create their own fireworks display and were excited to invite their friends to their role-play event. Children are taught to recognise and talk about their feelings as part of the daily routine. They build positive relationships with older pupils in the school through the 'Pickhill buddies' programme. This develops their sense of belonging to the school community.

The reading curriculum ensures that pupils in the earliest stages of reading access a high-quality phonics curriculum. Later stages of this reading curriculum improve pupils' reading

fluency and comprehension skills. Pupils who struggle with reading receive extra help each day. Pupils have a love of reading. The school has introduced several ways to create enthusiasm about sharing stories. Pupils read together in the 'reading snug' at playtimes. They are encouraged to read often through 'drop everything and read' time and the 'reading raffle'.

The school has introduced an ambitious curriculum. Pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life. Their needs are well met by staff. Teachers benefit from expertise and shared resources across the federation of schools. This helps lessons to be well sequenced and engaging. Pupils understand the expectations in lessons. They enjoy their learning. Pupils are confident to contribute their ideas in lessons. They work together well right from the early years. Mixed-age classes are well established. The sequenced curriculum supports pupils to work towards the expectations of their year group. Sometimes, in some curriculum subjects, teachers are not clear about how secure pupils' prior learning has been. This means that, occasionally, pupils are given tasks that are not precisely matched to what they know and can do.

The school prioritises pupils' learning and understanding of key vocabulary. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit important vocabulary in lessons. The resources and displays around school help pupils to revisit reading this vocabulary. Pupils are confident to use subject-specific vocabulary.

Pupils thrive in this school. They are proud of the local farming heritage and countryside. The school provides several pupil leadership opportunities. These help to develop pupils' confidence and citizenship. Pupils are confident to discuss ways to stay healthy and use the internet safely. The school provides a variety of experiences to widen pupils' understanding and respect of the different world faiths and cultures. Pupils benefit from the character development promoted through the curriculum. This includes carefully chosen '25 fantastic reads', educational visits, outdoor education, and opportunities to discuss global news. They are motivated by the 'Bee' awards and 'Honours' awards, which recognise pupils' contributions to the school and wider community. The curriculum offer for the personal development of pupils is strong.

The school has systems in place to promote good attendance. This contributes to pupils attending school regularly. Pupils' positive behaviour is a strength of the school. They treat each other with high levels of respect and kindness. They form friendships across different year groups. Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They meet challenges with enthusiasm.

All staff feel well supported, and their workload is not a concern to them. Those responsible for governance work well together. They are aware of their statutory responsibilities. Governors provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers are not clear about what pupils know and can do in some curriculum subjects. This means that the work that teachers set for pupils does not precisely match the learning they need to build on their prior knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop the systems to check what pupils know and can do in each year group across all curriculum subjects so that this informs their future learning.

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 school to be good in September 2014.

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	121510
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10290090
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrea Offord
Headteacher	Mike White
Website	www.pickhill.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Pickhill Church of England Primary School is part of the Synergy Schools Federation.
- The head of school is Nicole Rayner.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including members of the governing body and the local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors listened to pupils read from different year groups.
- 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 analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They reviewed responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindsay Lomas

Ofsted Inspector

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