Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Withnell Fold Primary School

Withnell Fold, Withnell, Chorley Lancashire PR6 8BA

Inspection date: 28 January 2025

Outcome

Withnell Fold Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this nurturing village school. They rightly describe it as welcoming and caring. Pupils of all ages enjoy learning and playing together. They feel safe and happy in school because they know that they could speak to a trusted adult if they had any worries. They are confident that staff would listen to them and resolve any problems.

The school is ambitious for what pupils should learn. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across many parts of the school's curriculum. Carefully selected trips complement and extend classroom learning. For instance, pupils have visited an archaeological dig, an observatory and a Buddhist temple.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite. They are respectful, confident and articulate when expressing their thoughts and views. They conduct themselves exceptionally well throughout the school day. Older pupils take pride in carrying out roles of responsibility. These roles include librarians, members of the pupil parliament and 'hotpot helpers', who support younger pupils at lunchtime.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests through extra-curricular clubs, such as yoga, sign language and 'glow-in-the-dark' fitness. The uptake of these is high across all year groups. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the opportunity to learn guitar, flute or clarinet, and many choose to join the school's choir.

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

Leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and those aspects that need to be improved. Knowledgeable governors bring useful skills and experiences to their roles. They offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders to take the school forward.

The school has made considerable improvements to the curriculum. In the main, the curriculum is ambitious and well designed. Each subject is being reviewed in turn to identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. In most subjects, the school has determined the sequence of learning that pupils need to take to build their knowledge over time. In a few subjects, the school has not yet clearly defined the key knowledge and skills that pupils must know. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects.

Staff enliven lessons with practical and investigative activities. These spark pupils' interest in learning. Staff check how well pupils remember new knowledge. They use this information to adjust future lessons. In most subjects, pupils achieve well. However, inaccuracies in some pupils' writing sometimes go unchecked. As a result, these pupils continue to repeat their errors. This hampers their ability to achieve as well as they should in writing.

The school identifies pupils' additional needs effectively. Pupils with SEND benefit from the support offered by knowledgeable staff and adaptations made to lessons. This helps pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their classmates.

Leaders prioritise reading. From the beginning of the Reception Year, children follow a well-structured phonics programme. Pupils practise their reading using books that contain the sounds that they already know. They readily use their phonics knowledge to work out unfamiliar words, for example when solving written problems in mathematics. When pupils find reading difficult, staff provide additional help. This enables pupils to develop into fluent readers.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is strong. The curriculum enables pupils to know how to keep safe and stay healthy. Pupils talk maturely about fundamental British values and how these relate to their own lives. The school encourages pupils to be outward looking and aware of the world beyond their village. For example, pupils learn about different cultures through online chats with a family in Chennai. Pupils also learn about differences closer to home by partnering a school in a more urban setting. Older pupils delight in taking part in the annual summer production, while younger pupils perform the nativity at Christmas. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to visit London, including tours of the Houses of Parliament and the National Gallery. They also experience outdoor and adventurous activities on a residential visit. Pupils recognise the value of such visits in helping them to develop independence and confidence.

Staff have high expectations of behaviour. Classrooms are purposeful with no distractions to learning. Pupils listen attentively and with respect to staff and to each other. Pupils of all ages behave exceptionally well around the school and at playtime. Children in the early

years quickly settle into the school routines. Older pupils serve as excellent role models. They enjoy working and playing alongside younger pupils. Attendance has a sharp focus. Most pupils attend well. The school takes prompt action to support the families of the small number of pupils who are absent too often.

Staff appreciate the consideration given to their well-being. They feel that leaders take account of the impact that working in a small school can have on their workload. This makes staff feel valued, and they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the essential learning is not as clearly defined as it is in many other areas of the curriculum. This limits how well pupils learn in these subjects. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in these subjects so that pupils build a solid and sufficient body of knowledge over time.
- The school does not always ensure that pupils' errors in their writing are identified and corrected swiftly. As a result, some pupils continue to repeat mistakes over time. This hinders pupils' capacity to achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that the basic skills that pupils learn and apply in core subjects are reinforced in all writing activities, so that pupils write with increased accuracy and fluency across the curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in January 2015.

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	119306
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10348157
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Norman
Headteacher	Sara Moreton
Website	www.withnellfold.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has had several changes of staff and governors since the last inspection.
- The school runs on-site breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher of the school. They also spoke with other leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. They spoke to some pupils about their learning and other aspects of school life.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and throughout the school day.
- The inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education, including SEND.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspectors spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sharon Cowey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindy Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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