

# Inspection of a good school: Wooler First School

Brewery Road, Wooler, Northumberland NE71 6QF

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Inspection dates:

3 November 2022

## Outcome

Wooler First School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and love learning at this nurturing school. Leaders and teachers know their pupils very well and are determined to excite and engage every child in the school. Most parents agree there is a strong caring ethos. One parent said, 'They really do care about each individual.'

Leaders make sure that pupils have a breadth of opportunities to learn. Pupils develop independence skills, both inside and outside the classroom. They enjoy learning in their outdoor classroom. All pupils, including the youngest, benefit from swimming lessons to help keep them safe in their local area. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities to stimulate their love of learning, these include circus skills and yoga.

Pupils play an important role in their local community. They raise money for charities and take part in community performances.

Pupils feel safe and are well supported and listened to by staff. They enjoy their 'snack and chat' sessions with the headteacher.

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

Leaders are passionate about the curriculum. They are keen for pupils to develop a love of learning. Leaders provide a range of enrichment opportunities to strengthen the curriculum. For example, pupils had a visit from a geologist to support their learning in science and geography. The curriculum has been designed to develop knowledge and skills as pupils move through the school. Leaders have carefully mapped out what they want pupils to know and remember in each subject. In some subjects, leaders check the key knowledge and skills that pupils know and remember regularly. However, this is not the case in every subject.

Leaders have implemented a successful reading curriculum. Teachers read to their pupils daily and encourage them to vote for books they would like to read next. Leaders organise special events to foster a love of reading. For example, local authors visit the school and pupils go on visits to bookshops to learn about different authors. In the early years and Year 1, most pupils learn to read quickly. However, some older pupils still lack the skills needed to read fluently. These pupils need more help to catch up.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are engaging and motivate pupils to learn by building on prior knowledge. Teachers quickly identify and immediately address any misconceptions in lessons. Pupils are given opportunities to review their work and to try again. Pupils know that when they are finding something difficult teachers will help them by doing things differently.

In mathematics and science, all pupils learn the curriculum regardless of their starting points. The curriculum is ambitious and is well planned and sequenced. Leaders identify the needs of individual pupils at an early stage. Teachers provide carefully planned and adapted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides highly effective support for staff to help them meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. For example, leaders work alongside speech and language therapists to provide the right support for pupils in lessons. Consequently, all pupils experience success in these subjects.

In the early years, there is a strong emphasis on developing independent and confident learners. Leaders have designed a curriculum that gives children the foundations they need to be successful learners. Children are given opportunities to learn in practical ways. This helps them to develop resilience and perseverance in readiness for Year 1.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel that the leadership team support them well. Leaders are considerate of the well-being of all staff members. Staff are appreciative of the actions leaders have taken so far to reduce their workload.

Governors are proud of their school and its place in the community. They are knowledgeable about the curriculum and work effectively with school leaders to strengthen the quality of education for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there is a strong culture of vigilance and keeping pupils safe. Systems for recording concerns are effective. Staff have up-to-date training and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.

Leaders complete the necessary checks to ensure that all staff are safe to work in school. Pupils feel safe. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of risk. For example, all pupils learn to swim as there are several rivers in the local area. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships and how to stay safe online.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some older pupils lack the phonics knowledge necessary to read with fluency. Teachers do not provide the support these pupils need to catch up quickly. Leaders should ensure that all staff have training they need to plan the necessary support for these pupils.
- Some subject leaders do not monitor their subjects effectively. As a result, they do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are learning the key subject knowledge and vocabulary. Senior leaders should continue to develop subject leaders' expertise, so that they understand how well their subject is being implemented.

## 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 school to be good on 24 May 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122236
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240196
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Deane-Hall
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wooler.northumberland.sch.uk/">www.wooler.northumberland.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There is a breakfast and after-school club managed by the school
- The school is not using any alternative education providers

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, SENCo and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school and personal development opportunities.
- Inspectors scrutinised the records for safer recruitment and met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors met with staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and the impact of any training received.
- Inspectors considered responses from pupil, parent and staff surveys, including Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Angela Whistler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Amy Keith

Ofsted Inspector

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