

Inspection of a good school: Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Yorebridge, Askrigg, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 3BJ

Inspection dates:

11 December 2019

Outcome

Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Askrigg is a safe and happy school. Pupils know the school's 'RESPECT' code, which places a high value on effort, manners, smartness and making good choices. The school's 'respect ambassadors' embody this positive and friendly ethos. Pupils speak clearly about being safe and how good behaviour is in school. Pupils know all about keeping safe online. They are proud of the many after-school clubs, such as choir or biking. Pupils are looking forward to the return of 'time to shine' in a few weeks. This is when they give presentations about an interest or item from home. 'Eco-Warriors' are tasked with making the school a better place. They pick up litter and have made bird feeders.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard and try their best. Despite this, some younger pupils' reading skills are held back. This is because they cannot read words in their reading books. Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are learned well. However, pupils do not develop a deep knowledge of key concepts. This is because sometimes work in mathematics is not matched well to pupils' abilities. Foundation subjects are not well planned and taught.

The well-being of pupils is important to the school. A new room, the 'Haven', has opened for pupils to use. This space helps them to be calm if they are upset and to think and talk about any worries. Classroom 'wigwams' also give pupils a quiet space to chill out in if they need to. One parent accurately wrote that 'everyone does their best to make the school a positive, welcoming place'.

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

The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are committed to their learning and take pride in their achievements. They respect each other's views and listen carefully to their classmates. Pupils are universally polite and well mannered. Every 'thank you' is met by a 'you're welcome'. Instances of poor behaviour are extremely rare. Staff and pupils are adamant that bullying never happens. Pupils have

many opportunities to learn outside the classroom. These include using the local environment and wooded areas. Pupils also attend two residential visits in key stage 2. They speak excitedly about these outdoor, adventurous experiences.

The curriculum is not yet planned consistently well in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils' knowledge is not built up systematically so that they can remember what they have learned. Whole-school plans do not make clear what pupils need to learn and in what order. The school has not identified the key concepts that thread through each individual subject. This means that pupils' knowledge in a range of subjects is inconsistent and sometimes weak.

The mathematics leader has made sure that important areas of the mathematics curriculum are planned well. Lessons are taught in an order that helps pupils understand. Pupils' basic skills in number are developed well. However, some work is not matched to pupils' abilities. Sometimes, too much is asked of pupils who are struggling to grasp new learning. On occasions, too little is expected of pupils who need appropriately demanding mathematics work to embed and deepen their learning. The leader of mathematics has begun to tackle this issue.

Younger children's phonics knowledge is quickly improving. Some younger children are skilled and fluent readers. For those pupils still learning how to decode words, reading books are becoming matched to their reading skills. This means some pupils can read with confidence on their own. However, not all pupils have reading books they can read by themselves. These pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. The school is aware of this. Plans are in place for staff training and the purchase of new reading books.

Children in the early years are independent and creative. They are eager to make friends, find out new things and stick at tasks without giving up. Communication and involvement with parents are strong. Most children in Reception already know their letter sounds and can blend some sounds to read harder words. The early years setting attended by Askrigg children is a dynamic place where children are curious and work hard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know how to keep children safe. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding know pupils and their families well. The school can show how it has had a significantly positive effect on certain pupils and their families. The regular updates for staff give them information about risks to watch out for. Governors fulfil their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding. The school and the wider community are committed to protecting pupils' emotional well-being. There is a clear focus on developing positive mental health for adults and pupils alike.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not yet coherently planned in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils do not have the chance to use their previous learning as a basis for new and future learning. Teachers are not enabling pupils to know more and remember more. Leaders must ensure that new plans for the teaching of creative and foundation subjects are created and implemented. Plans must ensure that teaching in all subjects allows pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge they need for future learning. Leaders must ensure that the whole curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before.
- The school is focused on ensuring pupils quickly learn to read. The school has begun work to ensure pupils' reading books match closely to their phonics knowledge as they are learning to read. However, this is inconsistent and hampers the development of fluency for some pupils. Leaders must make sure pupils are given books that contain only the sounds they know so they can read with increasing confidence.
- Some teachers are not implementing the planned mathematics curriculum well enough to meet the needs of all learners. Work is not always matched well to pupils' abilities. Some pupils who need to catch up do not receive their learning in small enough steps to ensure they grasp the key concepts before moving on. Those pupils who do quickly grasp new concepts are not provided with demanding work to help deepen their understanding. This hinders pupils' progress in mathematics. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how to check pupils' learning. Leaders should also ensure that teachers support and challenge the least and most-able pupils so they all do their very best.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School to be good on 5 November 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	121602
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10110812
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	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Mr David Madley and Ms Heather Limbach
Executive Headteacher	Miss Charlotte Harper
Website	www.b-a-wb.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 November 2015

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- Every pupil is of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below average.
- The substantive executive headteacher was absent during the inspection.
- The school is part of a hard federation with Bainbridge Church of England (C of E) Primary and Nursery School and West Burton C of E Primary School.
- Early Years children and key stage 1 pupils are educated at Bainbridge C of E Primary and Nursery School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with both the current part-time executive headteacher and the acting part-time executive headteacher, subject leaders and other members of staff, including the federation business manager.

- As lead inspector, I met with a group of governors, including the co-chairs of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority who currently works with the school.
- We took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View. We looked at the 7 parents' comments on the free-text facility. We also considered the 18 responses from staff to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes. We gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions.
- We considered a wide range of documentation, including subject plans and safeguarding documents. We also looked at information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- We looked in-depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This included discussions with leaders of the subjects, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work, listening to pupils read and discussions with pupils.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Bentley

Ofsted Inspector

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