

Inspection of Esh C of E (Aided) Primary School

Front Street, Esh, Durham, County Durham DH7 9QR

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Esh C of E Primary is a caring village school where the belief that 'everyone is valued' is lived out in all it does. Many pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of one another and the adults who work with them. All pupils are expected to do their best. The older pupils in school are excellent role models. They are extremely mature when talking to adults.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They listen attentively in lessons. There is no disruption to learning. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying at their school. Pupils feel safe and trust adults to resolve any issues that arise.

Pupils relish the additional responsibilities they are given. They are proud to be members of the school council. Pupils value the role they play in their community as young leaders. They talk enthusiastically about carrying out random acts of kindness, such as emptying neighbours' bins or litter picking.

Parents, carers and pupils feel proud to have this school in their local community. Parents praise the support they receive from staff. One parent reflected the views of many in writing:

'At Esh, the staff genuinely care about the children who attend the school. It is clear to see from the decisions that are made and provisions which are put in place that the children are at the centre of everything the school does.'

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which the content of the curriculum is taught. For example, in science, pupils learn important facts about forces before revisiting this topic when working on engineering projects. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to recap important knowledge from previous years.

The curriculum is successfully adapted for pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). Teachers check that pupils with SEND have understood previous content before moving on to new areas of learning. Leaders ensure teachers receive support and training to deliver the planned curriculum well. However, some subject leaders do not have a clear understanding of how aspects of their subjects are introduced in the early years.

Adults regularly check what pupils have learned. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned in science, history and mathematics. Teachers frequently go over what pupils have learned in the past. In science, pupils could explain which soils and conditions would be best for plant growth.

Leaders give the teaching of reading a high priority. Early reading is taught well. There is plenty of extra help for pupils who need it. Most pupils learn to read fluently by the end of key stage 1. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. Teachers read to pupils every day. Pupils enjoy this. Leaders have selected a range of interesting books for pupils to study and read together.

Personal development is well planned and taught. Pupils learn about different types of families. They also learn about the British values of democracy and mutual respect. They show clear knowledge of these values. Pupils are effusive when they talk about equality and they celebrate one another's differences.

Children in the early years make a good start to their learning. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for reading and mathematics prepares children well for the next stage. Children learn to read fluently. They learn key number facts. They listen attentively to their teachers and each other. Staff communicate well with families and build strong relationships. However, leaders have not fully mapped out how the early years curriculum prepares children for some of the wider subjects they will experience in key stage 1.

There is strong leadership in school. Leaders motivate and develop others. Without exception, staff say that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. All staff are rightly proud to be part of the team.

Governors and trust leaders provide strong direction. They provide effective challenge and support to leaders. They know the school well and are right to have confidence in its leadership.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure pupils are safe. Staff receive regular and appropriate training. They have a thorough understanding of the role they play in keeping pupils safe. Adults know pupils and their families well. They are quick to identify and report any signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with relevant agencies so that pupils receive the support they need. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe in lessons, assemblies and in planned activities. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not fully considered how some curriculum subjects and topics are introduced in the early years. This means it is not always clear in curriculum planning how children are prepared for some of the wider subjects they experience in Year 1. Leaders should ensure that they map out what children will

need to know and experience in the early years so that they are better prepared for the next stage.

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.

If you are the school and 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	148303
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10229046
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Mackings
Headteacher	Andrew Park
Website	https://eshprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Esh C of E Primary is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. It is part of the Melrose Learning Trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the chief executive officer of the trust. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. An inspector reviewed the school's single central record.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, throughout the inspection, including pupils who had been supported by the school to improve their behaviour. Inspectors also observed breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector met with the trust's special educational needs coordinator and checked the quality of support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered the views of 58 pupils and 10 staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors also considered the responses from 34 parents to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Melanie Maitland, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Catherine Beard

Ofsted Inspector

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