

Inspection of Wensley Fold Church of England Primary Academy

Manor Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 6LX

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Donna Simpson. This school is part of Wensley Fold Church of England Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Donna Simpson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Leigh.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Wensley Fold Church of England Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Wensley Fold (VC) Church of England Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as Wensley Fold Church of England Primary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that their school is a very special place. Each day is filled with magical learning opportunities. Classrooms sparkle with books, resources and images that fire pupils' imagination. Pupils play happily outdoors in beautiful grounds that have far-reaching views of the world around them. The quality of education that pupils receive is simply exceptional.

Pupils experience nothing but the best from early years to Year 6. The school's expectations of what pupils can achieve are extremely high. Pupils strive successfully to meet these expectations each day. Children in the Reception class know that they must listen carefully. Older pupils work hard and stay focused in their lessons. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve the best possible outcomes.

Around the school, indoors and outdoors, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They follow the school rules conscientiously. For example, everyone has to walk to the left on the stairs so that there is enough room for people to pass safely. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger ones. The school quickly spots and addresses any behaviour that might lead to bullying.

The school provides an impressively wide range of activities for pupils' personal development. For example, pupils can join clubs for sports, drama or cookery. They can participate in caring for the hens and guinea fowl, who greet pupils noisily each day. Pupils can even train as beekeepers and run the school's small business selling jars of honey. These experiences help to foster pupils' talents and interests for future life.

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

Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is broad, exciting and highly ambitious. This curriculum takes account of the wide range of needs of pupils in the school, including those with SEND.

The school serves a diverse community. Most children who start in early years speak English as an additional language. Nonetheless, they quickly develop the strong language and communication skills that enable them to learn extremely well over time. Regardless of their different starting points, pupils in each key stage achieve consistently high outcomes in national tests.

The curriculum is clearly organised from early years to Year 6. The school introduces pupils to essential knowledge in each subject in small, well-ordered steps. This means that pupils' new knowledge is solidly built on firm foundations. Over time, pupils learn deeply.

The school provides pupils with learning that is engaging and exciting. Pupils develop strong connections between new and earlier learning. These connections

help pupils to understand bigger ideas and concepts over time. Teachers' regular checks in lessons help to identify whether pupils have any missing knowledge. Pupils receive prompt support to catch up if ever they need it. The school makes effective use of information gathered through assessments, for example to make any necessary adjustments to the curriculum. No opportunity is lost to improve learning for pupils.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Children in early years learn phonics as soon as they start school. Very quickly, they learn to break down and build up the sounds in words. This continues in Year 1 with more complex groups of letters and sounds. Pupils love to read to adults and they are proud of their successes. Should any pupil be at risk of falling behind, staff provide swift help to ensure that these pupils catch up quickly.

In every class and around the school, pupils are immersed in a world of captivating books and stories. They read and listen to a rich range of fiction, poetry and information books. Children in early years enjoy their story times. Older pupils look forward to the special time when adults read to them. Pupils said that they treasure their visits to the school's 'amazing' libraries, which are designed to foster a deep and lasting love of reading.

The school works quickly and purposefully to identify any pupils who may have SEND. There is effective communication between the school, parents and carers, and a wide range of professionals. This ensures that pupils with SEND receive expert support when it is needed. Pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They know that adults in school expect nothing less. Pupils commit themselves to their learning and show respectful attitudes towards adults and to each other. Pupils enjoy school, and very few pupils are regularly absent. These positive, responsible attitudes contribute significantly to pupils' ability to learn and to achieve.

The school goes beyond the expected in providing for pupils' personal and character development. Through debate and discussion, pupils learn to consider opinions that are different from their own. Pupils appreciate the disadvantages that others may face, such as inequality, poverty or loneliness. This prompts pupils to engage in activities to 'make a difference'. Pupils learn to respect those from other faiths or cultures. The experiences that pupils receive prepare them exceptionally well for life in British society.

Trustees, all of whom are governors of the school, carry out a range of activities to assure themselves that the school's systems are working well. This has helped them to ensure that the quality of education has remained exceptional over time. When making decisions, trustees are considerate of the impact on staff's workload.

The school communicates effectively with parents and the community to support pupils' education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	139514
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10255988
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	421
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Leigh
CEO of the trust	Donna Simpson
Headteacher	Donna Simpson
Website	www.wensleyfold.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Wensley Fold Church of England Academy Trust, which is a single-academy trust.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in July 2009. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before March 2025.

Information about this inspection

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

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector also met with trustees.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at a range of pupils' books. 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 considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspectors also chatted to a few parents at the beginning of the school day.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- The inspectors spoke to some pupils about school life.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Midgley

Ofsted Inspector

Jackie Stillings

His Majesty's Inspector

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