

Inspection of Fitzwilliam Primary School

Second Avenue, Pontefract WF9 5BA

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Lynsey Whalley. The school is part of the Inspire Partnership Multi-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, Matthew Knox, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John North.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and caring school. Pupils are looked after and well-cared for. Decisions at the school are made in pupils' best interests. As a result, pupils love their school. This is demonstrated in their positive rates of attendance.

Pupils know that they are expected to be 'respectful, responsible and ready.' They do their best to live up to this. They behave well. The three 'pocket principles' help them to understand what positive behaviour looks like. They respond quickly to reminders. Pupils are proud to earn reward points, become star of the day and/or week and to earn recognition rewards in Friday assemblies. Pupils hold the rewards that they receive for living out the school's expectations in high regard. Pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour get the understanding and support needed. They get on well.

The school has high expectations of pupils' academic achievement. In lessons, pupils pay attention and work hard. However, in some subjects, there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is partly due to some shortcomings in the school's previous curriculum. As such, pupils do not yet benefit from a consistently good quality of education. This is improving rapidly.

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

After an unsettled period, school leaders, ably supported by the trust and local governors, are bringing important improvements to the school's work. Well-considered changes are being made to the curriculum, behaviour and provision for pupils' personal development. The school has listened carefully to what pupils, staff and the wider community have said. It has acted upon these findings. As a result, the school is now held in high regard. There is strong capacity for continued improvement.

The school's curriculum sets out what pupils will learn at each stage of their education. It is designed to build pupils' knowledge cumulatively over time. However, in some places, the curriculum does not make clear the most important knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember. Where this knowledge is identified more clearly, there is variation in how well teaching ensures that this is focused on in lessons. As a result, pupils do not learn and remember some important content as well as they should.

Pupils get off to a positive start in reading. The schools' phonics programme is well-organised. It is taught well. The school regularly checks how well pupils learn and remember the sounds that different letters make. Pupils go on to use this confidently in new texts. Pupils who begin to fall behind are quickly identified and helped to catch up. Beyond phonics, pupils go on to study a wide range of books, genres and authors. The school's drive and passion for reading is contagious. Pupils go on to become keen readers.

The school is introducing a more systematic approach to teaching mathematics. The curriculum is well organised. Lessons are engaging. Despite this, teaching does not consistently focus sufficiently on some of the basic number facts and mental arithmetic that pupils need. This slows them down and hinders their achievement.

In many instances, staff check how well pupils learn the curriculum. They use these checks in lessons to identify gaps or misconceptions in pupils' understanding. However, there is variation in how well the school uses information from these checks to get a wider picture of pupils' progression through the curriculum. This means that they cannot identify where strengths exist and where improvements are needed to the implementation of the curriculum.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are well-cared for. Provision for children's social and emotional development is prioritised. Learning is fun and exciting. The curriculum sets out the milestones that children are expected to reach at each point through Nursery and the Reception Year. The school regularly checks to make sure those who are not keeping up get the help that they need. The curriculum prepares children well for what they will go on to learn in key stage 1.

Typically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. The school ensures that these pupils' needs are understood. Pupils get the help that is needed to ensure that they learn the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils who attend the school's nurture group receive bespoke support that is closely tailored to their needs.

Provision for pupils' personal development is a strength. The school has designed a well-designed programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils develop an impressive understanding of fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. They benefit from a wide range of visits and activities that adds to their cultural capital. They learn to understand and manage their feelings and emotions. This has contributed well to the improvements that have been secured in pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not ensure that teaching enables pupils to learn some of the basic number facts and mental arithmetic strategies they need. This slows them down and hinders their progress through the mathematics curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils learn the strategies they need to help them to develop a secure understanding in mathematics.
- Occasionally, the curriculum does not make clear the important content that pupils are expected to learn. In addition, where such knowledge is identified, teaching does not consistently address this well enough. These weaknesses mean that pupils do not learn aspects of the curriculum as well as they should. The school should highlight the important knowledge that pupils need to learn across all subjects. In addition, the

school should work with staff so that teaching, including the tasks that pupils are set, enables them to learn the intended curriculum well.

- The school does not identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum consistently well. This means that in some subjects the school does not have a clear insight into how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. The school should better check the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and use this information to support further improvements.

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	144449
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10346690
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John North
CEO of the trust	Matthew Knox
Headteacher	Lynsey Whalley
Website	www.fitzwilliamprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Inspire Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- There have been many leadership and staffing changes since the school's previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in October 2023. There have been three headteachers since the school's previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years leader and groups of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and design and technology. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders, looked at curriculum documentation and talked to pupils about science, geography, computing, art and design, religious education and PSHE.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local academy committee. He met with the chief executive officer of the trust, and the chair and vice chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke informally to parents and carers outside the school. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to governance, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' plans for improvement and their assessment of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes, in the dining hall and on the playground. An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andy Jones

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025