

# Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hernstone Lane, Peak Forest, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 8EJ

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Inspection date: 21 January 2025

## Outcome

Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Peak Forest is a happy and friendly place to learn. The school radiates a warm and inclusive ethos. Pupils attend well and are keen to acquire their reward wristbands. They know that they are well cared for. Pupils feel happy and safe. One parent captured the sentiments of those who shared their views when they said, 'My children love it here and skip into school every morning.' Others note the school's nurturing 'family' feel.

The school takes its responsibility to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain seriously. Pupils enjoy an extensive programme of personal development and enrichment. The curriculum maximises opportunities to visit places within the Peak District and beyond rural Derbyshire to promote their spiritual and cultural understanding. The twice-weekly 'together days' provide ample opportunity for social integration with pupils at other schools in the federation. Pupils enjoy these days, as well as the opportunity to make new friends.

Pupils behave well. They understand the importance of treating everyone equally and with respect. Pupils embrace both the British values and the school's 'SMILERS' values, which they helped to create.

Expectations are typically high. Most pupils achieve well.

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

The school has a successful vision and ambition for all pupils to be 'happy, healthy and hungry to learn', underpinned by strong and stable leadership at all levels. Leaders,

including governors, have a precise and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Staff morale is positive. They know that leaders care for their well-being.

The school prioritises reading well. Staff understand the importance of using literature to deepen pupils' understanding of the world around them. Pupils are exposed to a rich and stimulating range of texts that reflect their own rural identity and experiences, as well as preparing them for the wider diversity of modern society. Teachers read to pupils with flair, capturing pupils' attention and imagination.

The school has recently changed its phonics programme for teaching pupils how to read. Reading books match the sounds pupils are learning. All staff are trained to use the new programme. Most staff deliver the scheme well. Pupils have positive attitudes towards reading. They learn to read well and fluently. Pupils who fall behind receive swift support to gain the skills they need. However, sometimes, staff do not systematically check to make sure all pupils comprehend what they have read.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff receive the information they need to support these pupils. Pupils with SEND are mostly well supported in the classroom.

Recently, the school has made increasingly ambitious changes to the curriculum in several subjects. Subject leaders within the federation have considered how pupils build their knowledge over time from the early years to the end of Year 6. Teachers mostly have clarity about what is taught and when in the school's mixed-age groups. Children in Reception benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum and, typically, high-quality interactions with adults.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain new ideas clearly. Most pupils are responding well to the raised curriculum expectations. In art, pupils have strengthened their knowledge and application of different techniques in observational drawing, for example. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always check that pupils have fully understood new concepts, ideas and subject vocabulary before moving them on to different activities. As a result, some pupils, including pupils with SEND, develop gaps in their learning that are not always remedied.

Some pupils are not taught how to hold and use a pen well enough. These pupils are not able to transcribe as accurately as they should, including in the early years. The expectations of staff are not always high enough to ensure that pupils develop this skill well over time. The quality of pupils' work can sometimes appear untidy, despite pupils' efforts to present work well.

The school's programme for pupils' personal development is strong. Leaders have a sharp understanding of the knowledge and skills young people need to be ready for life in modern Britain as well as their next phase of education. Pupils do too. The school's curriculum for personal, social, economic and health development is comprehensive. Teachers ensure that pupils have a strong moral and cultural understanding of treating

everyone equally and with respect. Pupils behave well and typically look out for one another. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activity and wider experiences, including its connection with the Rural Derbyshire Sports Partnership. These help to develop pupils' experiences beyond the classroom and develop their appreciation of resilience and teamwork, for example.

The school has established a strong and vigilant culture to promote pupils' physical and mental well-being and safety. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and when outdoors in the Derbyshire countryside.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Staff do not consistently make the necessary checks to ensure that pupils' understanding of knowledge and skills is secure before moving them on to new tasks. When this happens, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge, and they lack the confidence to quickly recall important knowledge and subject vocabulary. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they might. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to systematically check pupils' understanding and remedy any misconceptions, helping all pupils to achieve as highly as they can.
- Some pupils are not taught how to hold and use a pen well enough. These pupils are not able to transcribe as accurately as they should. The school should ensure that all pupils are taught how to hold and use a pen consistently well so that they can write accurately and achieve more.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 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 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 112848   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Derbyshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10339655   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 32   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Nell Wakerley  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Andrea Tomlinson   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.woodlandfederationofpeakdistrictschools.co.uk">www.woodlandfederationofpeakdistrictschools.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 29 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005   |

## Information about this school

- Peak Forest CofE (VC) Primary is one of three schools in The Woodland Federation of Peak District Schools. The executive headteacher is responsible for all three schools. A single governing body oversees all schools in the federation.
- For two days each week, pupils across the federation learn together as part of the federation's 'together days'. For the remaining three days, pupils are based solely at the Peak Forest site.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Derby. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Anglican school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in October 2024.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and other members of staff, including the deputy headteacher and the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector spoke to the chair of the governing body by telephone. He also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangements for 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 visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stage 1 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including school policies and the school's records for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Deborah Mosley

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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