



# Lancashire Small Schools' Network

Summer Term 2025

# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Why I love Small Schools (Claire Halstead)
- Small Schools in Lancashire (Rachel Clements)
- Developing Independence (Steph Johnson)
- Ofsted Update (Richard Kershaw)
- Managing an Ofsted Inspection in a Small School (Sara Moreton)
- Challenges Faced and Sources of Support (Rachel Clements)
- Next Steps for the Network (Rachel Clements)




# Small Schools in Lancashire

- Lancashire has approximately:
- 24 schools with fewer than 50 on roll
- 83 schools with fewer than 100 on roll
- 151 schools with fewer than 150 on roll

(including academies)

This means:





Over **13,000** children in  
Lancashire are educated  
in a Small School



# Where are our small schools located?

District 1 (Lancaster)	22
District 2 (Wyre)	18
District 4 (Fylde)	9
District 6 (Preston)	11
District 7 (South Ribble)	8
District 8 (West Lancashire)	29
District 9 (Chorley)	14
District 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley)	24
District 12 (Burnley)	2
District 13 (Pendle)	11
District 14 (Rossendale)	12





# SMALL SCHOOLS OFSTED INSPECTIONS Update 2024-25

# Small Primary Schools Ungraded Inspections Aut/Spr 24-25

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Outstanding	1			
Good	5	2	1	

Number of Inspections = 9



# Small Primary Schools Graded Inspections Aut/Spr 24-25

	Quality of education				Behaviour and Attitudes				Personal Development				Leadership and Management				Early Years			
	O	G	RI	I	O	G	RI	I	O	G	RI	I	O	G	RI	I	O	G	RI	I
Outstanding	2	4			4	2			4	2			2	4			3	3		
Good		6	2		1	7			1	7				7	1		1	5	2	
RI		2	1			2	1			3				2	1			2	1	
Inadequate				1			1				1					1		1		
Outcome 3		1				1				1				1				1		

Number of Inspections = 19





# **Ofsted – Reports Published (Graded Inspections)**

Graded Inspection reports published  
for Small Primary Schools inspected  
2024-25

## Deep dives:

Early Reading 17

Maths 17

History 8

Geography 3

PE 2

Art & Design 2

Computing 1

Music 1



# Ofsted Reports - Areas of improvement

Published Reports for Graded and Ungraded Inspections – Autumn and Spring Terms 2024-25


- Curriculum design/Key knowledge 7
- Curriculum implementation 7
- Curriculum evaluation 2
- Gaps in pupils' knowledge 8
- Assessment 6
- Low expectations 1
- Phonics 2
- SEND 4
- Behaviour 4
- Early Years 2



- *In a small number of foundation subjects, the school has not fully considered where pupils may have gaps in important knowledge. This means that pupils are sometimes introduced to new learning without a secure foundation of key knowledge. This hinders them from learning all that they should. The school should ensure that the curriculum clearly identifies potential gaps in learning and teachers address these gaps so that pupils can learn the curriculum as intended*
- *In several subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This makes it difficult for them to make connections with prior learning when they learn new content. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to use assessment strategies with confidence and accuracy, ensuring that gaps in pupils' learning are identified and tackled quickly.*

*\*favourite for VB and DR*



- 
- *The school does not use assessment and feedback strategies consistently well to help pupils with their errors and misconceptions. This occasionally means pupils repeat basic errors or do not address some knowledge gaps swiftly. The school should refine its assessment and feedback approaches so pupils receive effective support to address their errors and misconceptions.*

*\*favourite for DS*



# Inspecting Small Schools

- Context
- Curriculum
- Collaborators
- Classes of mixed-ages
- Checking the impact of the curriculum



# Context

- More than school community
- Location
- Changes in pupil cohorts
- Staffing
- IDSR – main messages
- Features of your curriculum design



# Curriculum

- Curriculum will look different
- Progression models
- What approach you took and why
- Evidence – pupils' work, lesson visits, pupil discussions
- Inspectors open to innovation



# Collaborators

- Networks
- Collaborations, Federations, Trusts
- Understand subject leader might work in another school





# Classes of mixed-ages

- Challenges of constructing a curriculum
- Age-appropriate support
- \*Training for inspectors



# Checking the impact of the curriculum

- Outcomes – achieving well in your curriculum
- Wider curriculum – preparation for life beyond your school



# What Ofsted want to achieve

- High quality inclusive education
- Great outcomes for everyone – including SEND, disadvantaged, vulnerable
- Better information for parents
- A collaborative and transparent approach
- High and rising standards



# How

- Establish a baseline – learners' development, experiences and outcomes – understand and account for unique context
- Introduce clearer criteria to support school improvement (toolkit)
- More collaborative – should feel different – professional conversation with leaders
- Starts on school premises – tour of school
- Start broad – narrow down to school's priorities
- Celebrate what has been done well
- Independent eyes on what to develop next
- Make areas of improvement clearer whilst recognising leaders' independence and expertise
- Report cards – information at glance plus in depth

# Toolkit

- Should help leaders self-evaluate
- Inspections will start with the assumption that a school is 'Secure'
- Most schools will be in the middle three sections – strong, secure, attention needed
- Attention needed – HT should be able to address issues
- Exemplary IS NOT the same as Outstanding – “world class practice that others can benefit from”



# Inclusion

- SEND, disadvantaged, vulnerable
  - Understand your context - who are you most worried about and what are you doing to address barriers
  - Opportunity to celebrate what small schools are doing
- \*Trying to ensure children attend their local school as they are inclusive



# When

- Inspections will start on 3<sup>rd</sup> November
- Prior to start date – webinars and roadshows



# Withnell Fold Primary School



**OFSTED January 2025 – 1 day  
ungraded**

Reaching potential

Rising to challenges

**Lancashire**  
Respecting all



# School Context

- 88 on roll
- Head and Deputy
- 4 classes
- No school hall or field
- Low % PP
- High % on SEN register



**Lancashire**

Reaching potential

Rising to challenges

Respecting all

## **Preparation in advance:**

- Cohort sheet
- Year 6 imports
- Staffing sheet to show changes and reasons why
- IDSR
- 3 - year trends in KS1/FS/KS2/Phonics
- Crib sheet for governors
- Send govs 1<sup>st</sup> part of SEF
- Yr1 phonics





- **Prepare whole School list with SEN, EAL, FSM, PP, Gender**
- **Check website – visitors!**
- **Talk to other school about recent inspection**

# Initial phone call



- Admin of the inspection
- Introductions
- Portal password
- What needs to be sent out
- 2 more phone class to follow – arrangements and then context / progress/focus areas
- Upload SEF, SDP and govs minutes evidence of challenge and support ,to portal

**Check Prospective light (Watchsted) to find out about Inspector**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> phone call 1 hour



- PE issue
- Wellbeing of Head and staff
- Lesson observations protocol
- KIT meetings throughout the day
- Talk to pupils about behaviour
- Impact of COVID on learners – which year groups?
- **Data is a signpost not a destination**
- Subjects strengths - Those in development
- What adaptations will they see for SEN in classes?
- Talk through curriculum – how planned and sequenced

# Final phone call



- Focus areas outlined
- Current attainment and SEN adaptations
- Curriculum –Quality of education in Hist/Geog /Science and the impact leaders have had
- British values
- Schools work to improve staff workload and wellbeing
- Timetable sent through – able to adapt

Reaching potential

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Respecting all

# Inspection Day



- Class lists
- SCR with bursar questions on safeguarding
- Observed phonics / KS2 maths/ spoke to 5/6 about British Values
- Personal development / Attendance/ Behaviour with me and DHT.
- Sensitive to ECT new to school – 5 days into new job
- Spoke to subject leaders supported by DHT as curriculum lead
- Spoke to governors / school advisor
- Looked at geog/hist/science books – discussed these with children Yrs 2/4/6
- Observed lunch
- Spoke to pupils about maths – Yrs 1/3/5
- Spoke to staff about wellbeing and workload – no SLT allowed
- Playground with parents
- Asked for lots of attendance data from SIMS

Anything else we wanted to show off

SLT allowed observe final meeting and allowed to feed into comments

Reaching potential

Rising to challenges

**Lancashire**  
Respecting all

# You told us...

## Challenges faced include:

- Curriculum
- Mixed age classes/ changing class structures
- Roles and Responsibilities/ Workload
- Finances
- SEND including parental expectation
- Lack of resources/CPD specifically for small schools
- Marketing





# Local Networks



# Chartered College of Teaching

**The  
Great Big  
Small Schools  
INSET DAY**

Exploring  
Curriculum  
Conundrums within  
Small Schools

Online Network Session

Monday June 30th 3:45 – 4:45

[JOIN NOW!](#)



National Society  
for Education

Chartered College  
of Teaching

**The  
Great Big  
Small Schools  
Network**

**Stronger Together**

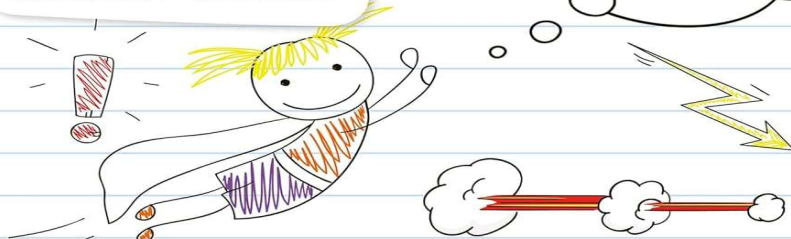


**Lancashire**  
County  
Council





A JOHN CATT PUBLICATION



# SMALL and MIGHTY

Conversations about the opportunities  
and challenges of small primary schools.



Aimée  
Tinkler

 hachette  
LEARNING







THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
EDUCATION OFFICE

FOUNDATION FOR  
EDUCATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP

# NPQ

*small*

NPQ Small: Specifically tailored for leaders in small schools, this route offers fully virtual delivery with flexible session timings. Content includes case studies and examples relevant to small school contexts.



# Ideas for the future

- Termly network meetings
- District Steering Groups
- Website



# Contacts

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