

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



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Mr Duncan Priestley
Headteacher
Crosby Ravensworth Church of England (Aided) Primary School
Crosby Ravensworth
Penrith
Cumbria
CA10 3JJ

Dear Mr Priestley

Short inspection of Crosby Ravensworth Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 September 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, staff and governors place pupils' achievement and well-being at the heart of everything you do. All of you take pride in the school and work hard to make sure pupils achieve the best they possibly can. Staff have maintained an extremely positive climate for learning where pupils feel safe, valued and confident to give their views. As a result, the children are happy, self-assured and successful learners. They really enjoy coming to school and they work and play together constructively.

Many changes have taken place since the last inspection, with your appointment as a new headteacher, new teaching staff, a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and other new governors. It is to the credit of you all that you have sustained the good quality of education and secured improvements to pupils' achievement since the disappointing results of 2014. The pupils who left in 2015 attained better standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils who are currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points in each class.

At the last inspection, the inspector commended leaders for providing a caring environment where pupils enjoy learning, make good progress from the start and develop good personal skills. The school has maintained these positive aspects.

Inspectors also identified the following areas for improvement: challenge for the most-able pupils, the presentation of pupils' written work, teachers' marking and the use of technology to support learning.

The school has tackled these areas successfully. The most-able pupils are provided with more challenging work so that they can achieve the high standards of which they are capable. This is especially evident in mathematics, where teachers' higher expectations of what pupils can achieve mean that progress has quickened in both classes. The impact can be seen in the increased proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils' written work is of good quality, following a whole-school focus on improving handwriting and the structure of their written compositions. The more recent focus on grammar, punctuation and spelling is also having a positive impact. Marking is consistent and pupils know how they can improve their work. Pupils enjoy and are proficient in using the new technology resources for research and to record their work.

Staff and governors have high aspirations for pupils and strive continually to improve the school. More work is needed in a few areas and leaders, governors and staff have the capacity to make improvements successfully. The school has rightly identified reading in Key Stage 1 as a particular priority. This inspection also identified the need to: broaden the scope of leadership; assess children's knowledge and skills accurately when they enter school; and ensure pupils make better progress in art, music, and design and technology. The next steps are outlined in more detail at the end of the letter.

I spoke with many parents at the school entrance at the start of the day and have taken account of two written responses. All of those I spoke with and who wrote to me were extremely positive about their children's experiences. 'We feel so lucky to have such a great small school in our area. Our daughter is known and cared about by the staff and loves learning and spending time at school. She is also stretched in her learning and enabled to do her best', was typical of the comments made. Another parent commented that their children 'have confidence galore... as a result of the school environment at Crosby'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. You, together with governors, have acted to improve safeguarding arrangements to ensure the utmost safety of children. Appropriate checks are carried out for all staff, governors and volunteers and comprehensive risk assessments have been completed. Leaders have commissioned a highly detailed external audit of health and safety and are acting on its recommendations diligently. Safeguarding and behaviour policies have been updated to ensure all requirements are met and all staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. All staff have received safeguarding training and know what to do should they have any concerns. Disabled pupils and those who have

special educational needs or medical conditions are catered for well; detailed health and care plans have been agreed with parents.

I spoke with virtually all pupils during my visit and they said they feel extremely safe and secure. They thrive in the school's friendly and affirming atmosphere. Pupils say that there is no bullying in their school and there was no evidence to the contrary. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know who they can talk to if they ever have any concerns. They have been taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe when they are online.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, leading to plans for improvement that focus on the right actions. For example, training for teachers has focused on improving teaching in mathematics and this has successfully raised pupils' achievement. You have rightly identified that pupils are not making rapid enough progress in reading in Key Stage 1 and are tackling this as a priority.
- Governors are committed and ambitious for the school; they have a good range of skills and expertise. They contribute to the positive culture that enables pupils to thrive and staff to develop professionally. Finances are managed effectively to ensure value for money. Many governors are new, including the Chair, and have not fully developed their role in systematically challenging the headteacher and staff.
- As a headteacher with a substantial teaching commitment, you are working hard to balance the demands of teaching and providing whole-school leadership. You provide a very good role model and pupils benefit from your highly motivating teaching. However, time constraints mean it is difficult for you to use your skills to support other staff to develop their practice or their own leadership skills.
- Pupils enjoy learning because lessons are fun and teaching is well matched to their abilities and ages in both classes. Teachers know the pupils extremely well and are good at tuning in to their particular learning needs. You have made good use of staff expertise and peripatetic teachers so that pupils experience different approaches and benefit from teaching by subject specialists. Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and the many opportunities they have for practical and outdoor learning.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in writing, mathematics, science and religious education. They gain from a broad physical education curriculum and are enthusiastic about topic work where they gain knowledge and skills appropriate for their age in geography, history and computing. Pupils enjoy art, music, and design and technology but they do not make the same progress in these subjects because they are not taught the programmes of study as systematically as in other subjects.

- Children in the early years are happy to come to school and feel safe. The early years curriculum enables children to develop a broad range of skills, make good progress and grow in confidence. Staff do not always take account of what children already know and can do, however, when they assess children's knowledge and skills at the start of the Reception class. Consequently, activities do not help the more-able children to develop their knowledge and skills as quickly as they could from the start of the year.
- Pupils care for and respect each other. As one pupil said, 'everyone cares for each other and the older children look out for the younger ones'. When they play together outdoors, for example, there is a wonderful atmosphere as they share in the imaginary world of 'dens' and 'shops' that they have constructed among the trees.
- Pupils are articulate and sociable and are helped to develop high self-esteem. They have high aspirations and move on to new challenges with confidence. In lessons pupils listen to and encourage each other. They concentrate well and persevere with challenging tasks.
- Pupils are taught about, and have a good understanding of, British values such as democracy, freedom of speech and respect for different faiths. They are reflective and thoughtful when considering ethical issues. Their spiritual, moral and social skills are very well developed. Pupils recognise that broader society is more diverse than their community. You have identified that pupils would benefit from making links with schools in different contexts in order to broaden their horizons and develop their cultural awareness further.
- You have developed a number of fruitful partnerships with leaders and schools in the local area, through the Middle Eden Small Schools (MESS) network and with Appleby Grammar School. Participation in the MESS network enables you and teachers to benefit from joint training, to check the accuracy of teachers' assessment of children's work and to share best practice. It also enables pupils to meet those from other schools, especially in preparation for their move to secondary school.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school because of the recent changes in leadership and teaching. You have benefited from the support and challenge provided by the local authority's adviser. The headteachers at Warcop Church of England Primary School and Long Marton School have also provided useful help as mentors.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- governors develop their roles and clearly understand their responsibilities in providing systematic challenge and support for leaders
- the headteacher is able to use his skills to help others across the school develop their practice and their own leadership skills

- the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 improves so that pupils make more rapid progress
- assessments at the start of the early years take account of what children already know and can do so that all children are provided with challenging activities that take their learning forward
- teaching in art, music, and design and technology builds on pupils' skills systematically and follows the national curriculum programmes of study.

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, teaching staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority's adviser linked with the school. I spoke with almost all pupils during lessons, around the school or in meetings. I spoke with many parents at the start of the school day and took account of written responses. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and look at their work. I looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and at the school's self-evaluation and action plans. I conducted a full investigation into safeguarding, including an evaluation of the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep children safe, risk assessments, training, safeguarding checks and record-keeping. I also looked at the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational or medical needs.