

Low Furness CofE Primary School

Church Road, Great Urswick, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0TA

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have responded swiftly and vigorously to the recommendations from the last inspection. The school is now good and continues to improve.
- The improvements that leaders have made to the quality of teaching have improved pupils' outcomes. Most pupils currently in key stages 1 and 2, including those who are disadvantaged, are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, because they draw upon a wide range of information. This helps them to take the right actions to improve the school further.
- Governors hold leaders effectively to account for the use of the pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils currently in school make similar progress to that of other pupils in school.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, carry out a range of activities to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Leaders of some subjects, especially those other than English and mathematics, do not have a clear enough overview of standards in their subjects to ensure that the most able pupils make strong progress.
- Teachers generally plan learning which enables pupils to learn well across a range of subjects. Sometimes the work they provide for the most able pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Children in the early years benefit from good teaching, including in phonics. This helps most of them to make strong progress. Sometimes the work which the most able children are set in writing does not challenge them enough.
- The curriculum which leaders provide enables pupils to develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Good leadership of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that these pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school. They attend school regularly and are proud of their achievements. Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for the most able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics develop a stronger understanding of standards in their subjects, so they can make sure that the most able pupils are making strong progress from their starting points
 - ensuring that teaching, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics, more consistently provides pupils with work that is challenging, so they make the progress of which they are capable
 - improving the teaching of writing for the most able children in the early years to help them to make stronger progress and, where appropriate, to exceed the expectations of the early learning goal in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have taken swift and determined action to address the recommendations from the last inspection. Their strong focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in good outcomes for pupils, which continue to improve. Pupils achieve well, and fulfil the school's mission statement to become 'well-rounded, caring and confident individuals within their community'.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, because they draw upon a wide range of information. This has enabled them to devise detailed plans for improvement which are focused on improving pupils' outcomes. The implementation of these plans is having a positive impact on the progress that pupils are making across the school, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have made good use of training and of the support provided by the local authority to help teachers improve their work. Subject leaders and teachers value the opportunities which senior leaders provide for them to participate in local networks of schools, where they are able to share and learn from good practice. This work has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school, which is now good.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently in school make similar progress to other pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and phonics.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have embedded effectively their systems for measuring the progress that pupils and groups of pupils make, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables them to hold teachers better to account for pupils' outcomes, and to take action where pupils are at risk of falling behind. Consequently, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making at least the progress expected of them and some are making better progress.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, carry out a range of activities to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across a range of subjects. They check the work in pupils' books and provide clear feedback and guidance to teachers and support staff so they can improve their teaching. This contributes to the strong progress most pupils make, especially in English and mathematics. However, leaders of some curriculum subjects do not have a clear enough overview of standards in their subjects. This means they are unable to ensure that teaching enables the most able pupils to make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders enrich the curriculum with trips, visits and residential stays to help pupils enjoy learning across a range of subjects. For example, pupils from Years 5 and 6 recently participated in a residential stay in Liverpool. This helped them to learn about the history and geography of the city and to compare it with their own area. Pupils then wrote about their experiences and, during the inspection, presented their learning in a special assembly for parents and carers. This helped them to develop personally, as well as to remember what they had learned.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils develop well spiritually, morally, socially and

culturally and are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures, and about differences within their community and in the wider world. The experiences which leaders and teachers plan provide pupils with help to develop an appropriate awareness of fundamental British values.

- Good leadership of the school's provision for pupils with SEND ensures that this group of pupils makes good progress from their various starting points. Leaders communicate effectively with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help they need. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the school's inclusive approach has earned leaders and governors the respect of parents and of colleagues, from both the local authority and the Diocese of Carlisle.
- Leaders' good use of the primary school physical education (PE) and sports premium funding is improving the extent to which pupils participate in sport in and out of school, including team sports and gymnastics. More pupils represent their school and take part in competitions. Pupils talk enthusiastically about these experiences and are proud of their achievements.

Governance of the school

- Following the last inspection, governors have taken determined action to improve their own effectiveness. They have made good use of an external review of governance to help them evaluate accurately their strengths and weaknesses. Their plans for improvement have had a positive impact on their work. Governors now hold leaders more stringently to account for their work to improve the school, and especially for pupils' outcomes, including those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors carry out a range of checks on the school's policies and procedures. Governors meet regularly with subject leaders and key staff, for example those with responsibilities for safeguarding, and use these meetings to ask important questions about pupils' progress. Subject leaders say they value these meetings, and they are helping them to improve their work.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the community which the school serves and play an important role in ensuring that pupils have opportunities to develop as members of their community, in line with the school's mission statement. For example, governors are instrumental in securing places for pupils to participate in charitable works and in activities linked to the church. This work has a positive impact on pupils' social, moral and personal development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors and leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. There are robust systems in place for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Leaders ensure that staff are trained to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and to protect children from extremism and radicalisation.
- Staff are vigilant and know how to report any concerns they may have about the welfare of pupils. Systems for working with a range of children's services are effective in ensuring that pupils receive the help they need. The actions that leaders take are

timely and appropriate.

- Leaders have made sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents agree.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Classrooms are hives of industry because teachers generally plan learning which keeps almost all pupils busy, focused and engaged. Pupils' good attitudes to learning mean they settle quickly to learning and usually listen very attentively.
- Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils behave well in class. They quickly become immersed in their work, chatting quietly about the tasks they are undertaking and consulting each other's thoughts, for example through their 'talking partners' activities. Their teachers help them to see mistakes as an opportunity to learn and they develop confidence and self-assurance as a result.
- Teachers enable pupils to build on what they know, and to develop and deepen further their knowledge and understanding. For example, in mathematics pupils in Year 4 deepened their understanding of how to work with multiples of numbers. They applied their skills to solve a range of problems and decided whether particular statements about multiples were true or false. Pupils explained their thinking because they understood what they had learned.
- Teachers check and assess pupils' progress in lessons. The questions they ask prompt pupils to talk about their thoughts and ideas. This enables teachers to adjust their teaching to address any misconceptions, and to take any necessary action where pupils are at risk of falling behind.
- Teachers plan learning which excites pupils' interests and motivates them to learn. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed competing with each other to count quantities of money by recognising increasingly complex combinations of notes and coins. Pupils in a Year 3 mathematics lesson enjoyed a practical activity in which they used their knowledge about measurement to predict how much water a range of containers would hold. These experiences had a positive impact on the progress pupils made.
- The training provided by leaders at all levels has improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers value this training and say that it helps them to improve their work.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers provide challenging work for almost all pupils and which helps them to make strong progress, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers make sure that pupils also practise their reading and writing skills in other subjects, for example in writing about events in history. Sometimes the work which the most able pupils are set in subjects other than English and mathematics does not challenge them enough to make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers generally provide pupils with useful feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Discussions with pupils and work in their books showed that they use this feedback to improve their work.

- Teachers provide pupils with homework in line with the school's policy. The large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed their children receive the right amount of homework.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have established an 'open door' culture which encourages parents and staff to share important information about pupils that may have an impact on their welfare and learning. This enables leaders to support pupils in school, and to secure any extra help that pupils need. Staff value these procedures and say they help them to better understand pupils' needs.
- The wider curriculum encourages pupils to develop attitudes of care, concern and empathy. For example, pupils take part in fundraising for a local hospice and for animal charities. Pupils enjoy singing to residents in a residential care home and invite older residents to share Christmas lunch in school. These experiences enable pupils to develop as positive citizens and to understand the needs of others.
- Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to learn about difference and diversity in their community and in the wider world, for example in relation to disability or family structure. Pupils learn about religions and cultures and take part in church services with other faith schools.
- Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values and of citizenship through the activities that teachers provide. For example, those who spoke with the inspector explained what they had learned about democracy, and how they have applied this learning in school, for example by voting for the head girl and head boy. Pupils learn about the impact they can have on the environment and engage in activities to protect it. These activities help them to develop responsible attitudes and to prepare them appropriately for future life.
- Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities. For example, pupils travel to Manchester to take part in the Young Voices choir festival. Pupils represent their school in sports and to take part in musical activities. These help pupils to develop personally and socially.
- Leaders ensure that pupils leaving key stage 2 are well supported in making a smooth transition to secondary school. Pupils have an understanding of how their teachers are helping them to prepare for the next stage in their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They are keen to talk about their learning and can explain what they have understood. Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements.

- Pupils conduct themselves well in school, and when moving between areas, such as the playground and classrooms. Pupils understand the clear systems established for promoting good behaviour, and that their own behaviour can have an impact on other people. Those who spoke with inspectors explained that bullying in school is rare, but if it does happen their teachers quickly put a stop to it.
- Pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and respond quickly to instructions, because teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This has a positive impact on the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders and governors have high expectations for pupils' regular attendance. The actions they have taken have successfully reduced absences for pupils currently in school, including those of disadvantaged pupils. The school promotes good attendance and punctuality through newsletters and communications with parents and through the provision of facilities such as the breakfast and after-school clubs. Attendance is currently average and continues to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Information published since the last inspection shows consistently that, in the key stage 2 national tests, a higher-than-average proportion of Year 6 pupils have attained at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion achieving the higher standards in all three subjects, although just below the national average, has improved consistently in recent years. By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils made progress that was similar overall to the national average in reading and mathematics. In the key stage 1 national tests in 2018, a higher-than-average proportion attained at least the expected standard in reading and mathematics.
- The progress that Year 6 pupils made in writing in 2018 was uncharacteristically low for the school. In both key stages 1 and 2, a slightly lower than average proportion attained at least the expected standard in writing. Despite this, since the last inspection leaders have made important improvements to the teaching of writing across the school. These improvements are having a positive impact on the achievements of pupils currently in school, especially in key stages 1 and 2. Work in their books shows that pupils are producing more writing and are using a wider vocabulary to bring their work to life. Most pupils are now making strong progress in writing.
- Pupils currently in school enjoy reading widely and often, and across a range of subjects. Those who read to the inspector did so with confidence and expression, for example, to reflect the speech of characters in a story. Pupils talk with enthusiasm of the books they read at home, as well as in school. Good teaching is enabling pupils to develop good comprehension skills. This helps them to understand the meaning of texts and to read unfamiliar words. Consequently, pupils currently in school are making strong progress in reading.
- Pupils deepen their mathematical understanding through extra challenges. Pupils demonstrate their skills in reasoning through their explanations of the methods they use to calculate answers and to solve problems. Consequently, most pupils are making at least the progress the school expects and some are making better progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently are making similar progress to that of others in the

school with similar starting points. Pupils with SEND are also making strong progress from their varying starting points because of the good teaching they receive.

- Pupils learn well across a wide range of subjects, including science, geography, history, art, religious education, PE and computing. Leaders have made changes since the last inspection to the ways in which teachers plan and assess pupils' learning in these subjects. These changes have ensured that pupils make steady progress towards meeting the age-related expectations in these subjects. However, sometimes in these subjects the work set for the most able pupils does not challenge them sufficiently to make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- In key stage 1, pupils develop their phonics skills well as a result of good teaching. Pupils learn to break up and blend sounds and letters in order to read unfamiliar words. They write readable sentences and use their skills to attempt the spelling of more complex words. This has a positive impact on the quality of the writing which pupils produce, especially in key stage 1. Year 1 pupils are making strong progress in phonics and most are on track to achieve the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start school in the Nursery or Reception classes with skills generally typical for their ages. The small number of children in the Reception class in 2018 makes comparison with national statistics unreliable. However, information from the school's assessments shows that in recent years all or almost all children typically reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Leaders and managers draw upon a range of information to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the early years provision. This enables them to secure good-quality training and appropriate professional development to improve the work of teachers and staff.
- Leaders and staff have successfully established strong partnerships with parents and with a range of other agencies. This enables them to share important information about children's welfare and development, and to secure support for children and families where it is needed, including for children with SEND.
- Adults have established simple rules and routines for children to follow. For example, children learn how to find and use the resources they need, and how to tidy them away afterwards. They learn how to make sensible decisions about what to do, how to share resources, and when they need to gather together on the carpet to listen to their teacher. These simple rules help children to learn to manage their own needs and feelings well and as a result, children's behaviour is consistently good.
- Children have access to a wide range of activities which promote their learning both indoors and out which they can select for themselves, or which adults lead. For example, children in the Nursery class enjoyed looking for creatures in the school's natural woodland environment. They were excited to discover woodlice hiding near the 'fairy garden' they had created. These experiences help children to develop attitudes of curiosity and motivate them to find out more.
- Children learn to share and to take turns through the activities which teachers provide.

Teachers plan activities to allow children to appreciate similarities and differences between each other. Children develop attitudes of care and concern for each other, and for other living things, such as the school's pet guinea pigs and chickens.

- Leaders and managers have established effective systems for assessing children's learning and development. All staff contribute important and accurate information about what children actually say and do. This information helps teachers to plan for the next steps in children's learning.
- The learning which teachers plan and the way in which it is taught enable children to practise important skills and to remember what they have learned. For example, in phonics lessons, adults use familiar actions to help children to remember letters and sounds they have already learned, and to introduce children to new ones. Children make strong progress in phonics.
- Work in children's books and learning journals, and information from the school's assessments, shows that despite their strong starting points, very few of the most able children make the extra progress of which they are capable in order to exceed the early learning goal in writing. This is because activities which teachers plan do not challenge them sufficiently.
- Teachers and support staff work well together in classrooms. Teachers communicate clearly their expectations for children's learning and this helps all staff to understand what they need to do to help children learn and to make progress.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children in the early years are effective and are aligned with those across the school. Staff are appropriately qualified and there are no breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	112299
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10087837

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dick Johnson
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Little
Telephone number	01229 588708
Website	www.low-furness-primary-school.co.uk
Email address	head@low-furness.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 February 2017

Information about this school

- This primary school is smaller than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- All pupils currently on roll are of White British heritage. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has elected a new chair and has appointed a number of new governors.
- The school has a Nursery class offering part-time places.
- The school also operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work across year groups and across a range of subjects.
- The inspector listened to some pupils reading, spoke informally with pupils and observed pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, governors, teachers and staff.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. The inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority's SEND service and a representative from the Diocese of Carlisle.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, safeguarding and recruitment information, behaviour logs, assessment information and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector spoke with some parents and took into account 64 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also took into account three responses to the pupil survey and 10 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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