

Inspection of a good school: Chapel Street Infants and Nursery School

Chapel Street, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria LA15 8RX

Inspection dates:

29 January 2020

Outcome

Chapel Street Infants and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is at the heart of a tight-knit community. It provides a warm and caring environment for all pupils. They are happy and proud of their school. Those that we spoke to told us that what makes their school special is 'the people who are in it'.

Children get a good start to their education in the early years. However, pupils do not achieve well in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Nevertheless, parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. Parents typically commented: 'Chapel Street is a very welcoming school with strong core values. Staff are friendly and nothing is too much hassle.'

Pupils feel safe. Most pupils attend school on a regular basis. However, improving attendance further remains a priority for the school.

Pupils are polite and behave well. They move around the school in a sensible manner. Pupils told us that bullying does happen occasionally. When it does happen, adults soon sort it out.

The school provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils beyond the academic curriculum, including weekly swimming lessons for pupils in key stage 1.

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

Leaders and governors were disappointed with the most recent set of published data. They are committed to putting things right so that all pupils get a good deal at this school. Leaders and governors have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Some subjects are carefully planned and sequenced. Curriculum plans make it clear what should be taught and in what order. Leaders carefully monitor how well curriculum

plans are working in practice for subjects such as reading. However, monitoring arrangements for subjects such as history and geography are less well developed. Pupils are keen to learn and this is reflected by their behaviour in class.

Pupils do not achieve well in reading. Leaders are aware of this and have taken swift action. Additional training has been provided to support staff in developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. Volunteers now help pupils who are struggling to read. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these actions. I listened to pupils read and noted that books are not consistently matched to the sounds that they have learned. Occasionally, staff mispronounce sounds when teaching phonics. In addition, more could be done to improve the learning environment to promote pupils' love of reading.

There is a similar picture in mathematics with regard to pupils' achievement. Some pupils are keen mathematicians and enjoy learning new concepts. However, at times, staff move pupils on to new learning too quickly before they have a secure understanding of basic calculations. On the other hand, pupils who are ready to learn new mathematical concepts are, at times, not moved on quickly enough. In essence, teachers are not making effective use of assessment to plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning.

Pupils are keen historians. They talk knowledgeably about how events in the past relate to the here and now. For example, they told us about how the many changes that Florence Nightingale made to improve the nursing profession and conditions in hospitals are still in place today.

Attendance has been a thorny issue for the school in recent years. As a result of a concerted effort by the school, attendance and punctuality are improving. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that these improvements are sustained. Pupils understand that if they don't attend school, they don't learn.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that their needs are met. Consequently, pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

Children achieve well in early years. Leaders place strong emphasis on developing children's language and mathematical skills. They do this well. Children are confident and independent. They rarely squabble because they are so busy learning. Adults are calm, kind and caring. They spend all of their time working with the children to develop and extend their learning.

Pupils access a wide range of after-school clubs and trips which broaden their experiences and develop their life-skills. They learn about different faiths and cultures. This helps them understand the diversity of the world in which we live.

Staff feel valued and work well as a team. They appreciate the care that senior leaders have taken to ensure that they have a good work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has high priority in the school. Leaders and governors ensure that staff appointed to the school are suitable to work with children. All staff have had safeguarding training. They have a secure understanding of procedures follow if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.

The school works well with outside agencies to provide appropriate support to pupils and families facing challenging circumstances. The school site is safe and secure. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not achieve well in reading. Leaders have taken immediate action to address this decline, for example through additional training for staff and the implementation of a programme, whereby volunteers come into school to support pupils who are struggling with their reading. Leaders need to ensure that these recent initiatives are embedded so that pupils' achievement in reading improves quickly.
- Pupils have access to a good range of texts. However, books that pupils read are not consistently matched to the sounds that they have learned. In addition, staff, at times, do not pronounce sounds correctly when they are teaching phonics. Leaders need to ensure that reading books are always well matched to the sounds that pupils know and that all staff are trained so that they are experts in the teaching of phonics.
- The learning environment across the school does not promote a real love of reading. Leaders should ensure that reading is given a higher profile within the environment. This will encourage pupils to take a greater interest in reading.
- Pupils do not achieve well in mathematics. Some pupils are moved on to new learning too quickly, whilst others who are ready to learn more are held back. Leaders need to ensure that staff make better use of assessment to plan activities that build securely on pupils' prior learning. This will help to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- In the last two years, rates of attendance have been amongst the worst in the country. As result of action taken by the school, attendance is improving and more pupils are turning up for school on time. However, these improvements are recent. The school needs to build on this success by thinking of more innovative ways of encouraging pupils to attend school on a regular basis and on time. This is so that attendance and punctuality do not impede on pupils' learning.
- The monitoring of subjects in the wider curriculum, such as history and geography, are not as well developed as other areas of the curriculum, such as reading. As a result, leaders do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring of subjects in the wider curriculum is of the same standard as that of reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Chapel Street Infants and Nursery School to be good on 24–25 May 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	112192
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10111057
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alan Steel
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Walton
Website	www.chapelstreet.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 May 2011

Information about this school

- A new chair of governors has appointed since the last inspection.
- The school now offers provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we held meetings with the headteacher and staff.
- I also met with governors and with a representative from the local authority.
- We visited lessons in key stage one and in the early years. We spoke to pupils at various times during the day.
- We observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- We spoke to parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- I listened to pupils read from Year 1 and Year 2.
- We held discussions with staff which focused on safeguarding. We also examined a range a of documentation relating to safeguarding.

- We carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and history. Deep dives are the methodology by which inspectors identify why a subject is as it is. This entails discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils.
- We considered the 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and read the free-text comments from parents. We also considered the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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