

# Inspection of a good school: St Bridget's CofE School

Main Street, Parton, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 6NY

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Inspection date:

6 July 2021

## **Outcome**

St Bridget's CofE School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy their time at this small and friendly school. They told inspectors that they get excited about spending time with their school friends and teachers.

Pupils feel safe in school. They told inspectors that adults take the time to listen and will help them if they have any concerns or worries. Pupils said that there is a bit of falling out sometimes, but that bullying is rare. If bullying does happen, pupils trust that adults in school will sort it out quickly.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils enjoy learning at the weekly 'beach school'. Pupils care about their local environment. They donate their artwork to the village railway station and help to keep the local beach free from litter.

Pupils behave well, in lessons and at playtimes, because teachers have high expectations of them. Pupils said that their learning is rarely interrupted by others.

Some improvements in curriculum planning, particularly reading, are beginning to overcome the weaknesses in pupils' achievement. That said, pupils do not learn as well as they should in some subjects, such as mathematics. This is because the curriculum that was in place until very recently has not helped pupils to learn and remember the knowledge that they need.

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

Leaders are developing a new and ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have improved curriculum plans and set out what pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn it. In some subjects, like reading and geography, detailed guidance helps teachers to design new learning that builds on what pupils know already. As a result, pupils are beginning to learn and remember more. However, this work is in its infancy in

other subjects. Leaders have not set out precisely the knowledge that pupils need to learn and when. This stops pupils from building on what they already know and can do. Moreover, some leaders do not check that teachers are following curriculum plans. They do not know how well teachers are delivering curriculums. This means that teachers are unable to benefit from the support that they need to deliver subject curriculums effectively.

Until recently, pupils have not benefited from a well-planned curriculum in mathematics. The implementation of the new mathematics curriculum has also been interrupted by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. This means that pupils struggle to remember much of their earlier learning in mathematics. Some teachers do not check to see how well pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are learning over time. Too often, teachers do not identify and help pupils to correct their mathematical misconceptions and errors. As a result, pupils struggle to build on their earlier learning in this subject.

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy a wide range of stories and poems. Leaders have successfully introduced a new phonics programme. Staff are confident to teach phonics following appropriate training and effective support from leaders. Each day, pupils can build systematically on their prior knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent. Teachers keep a careful check on how well pupils are learning. If pupils fall behind with their reading, they are given additional support to catch up quickly. Younger pupils, including those children in the early years, read books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Older pupils are helped by their teacher to choose a book that is just right for them. Consequently, most pupils, including those pupils with SEND, read with increasing confidence and accuracy.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have access to the same curriculum as everyone else. Teachers make useful adaptations to the resources they use. They provide additional support when required. However, weaknesses in the previous curriculum mean that pupils with SEND achieve as unevenly as other pupils in the school.

Pupils behave well in school. Classrooms are calm environments where pupils can get on with their learning without disruption. Pupils listen carefully, follow teachers' instructions, and are proud of their achievements.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all pupils enjoyed a wide range of clubs and visits to broaden their horizons. Leaders are gradually reintroducing these back into school life. For example, Year 6 pupils were delighted to attend a wild swimming event in the Lake District. Pupils also value the opportunities for additional practice with their reading and mathematics after school.

Governors have benefited from the support of the local authority to improve their knowledge of the curriculum. Leaders and governors are mindful of staff workload and well-being when making decisions. This helps staff to feel supported. Staff appreciate the opportunities that help them to develop professionally. Staff enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that effective systems are in place for staff to raise concerns about pupils who might be at risk. Staff benefit from regular training. This helps them to identify any possible signs of abuse or neglect. When needed, leaders work with other professionals to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they require. Leaders make appropriate checks on all adults who work and volunteer at the school.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through a well-planned programme of personal social, health and economic education. Pupils are particularly aware of the dangers associated with the nearby railway line, busy roads and the beach.

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

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

- Teachers' checks on how well pupils are learning are not precise enough. This is especially true in mathematics. There are times when teachers do not identify pupils' mathematical errors and misconceptions. This means that pupils' earlier learning in mathematics is not secure because they lack the knowledge of previously taught important mathematical facts and methods. Leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training and support to deliver the mathematics curriculum well and use assessment information effectively to inform teaching.
- Subject leaders are still in the process of developing and implementing new curriculum plans. The guidance that teachers use to plan learning is at different stages of development. This means that, in some subjects, pupils are not able to build on earlier learning effectively. Leaders should ensure that there is sufficient guidance for teachers to plan new learning that builds carefully on what pupils know and remember.
- Some leaders do not have the knowledge and expertise to review and evaluate how well teachers are delivering subject curriculums. This means that some teachers are unable to benefit from the support that they need to deliver new curriculums well. Leaders should continue to develop the expertise and subject knowledge of leaders so that they can support teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively.

## 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 or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 21 and 22 April 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 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 [here](#).

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112296
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10183994
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Kerry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Colley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stbridgets-par.cumbria.sch.uk/">www.stbridgets-par.cumbria.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 April 2015

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and a new chair of the governing body have been appointed.
- A high proportion of staff are new to the school since the time of the last inspection.
- The school is a Church of England voluntary controlled primary school. The last section 48 inspection took place on 2 May 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the 2025-2026 academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school life.
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. In these subjects they met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with

pupils, met with teaching staff, and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's plans for improvement, curriculum plans, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors met with a small number of parents and carers at the start of the school day. They considered 13 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 12 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They spoke with the headteacher and other staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.

### **Inspection team**

Garry White, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Cropper

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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