

Inspection of a good school: Culgaith CofE School

Culgaith, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1QL

Inspection date: 30 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe, knowing that adults care for them and listen to any concerns. Older pupils willingly look after younger pupils. They help out during lunchtime and make sure that everyone can join in with playtime games.

All pupils achieve well in reading, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, teachers' expectations of pupils' work in some other subjects are not high enough. Pupils do not learn and remember as much as they should.

Pupils know that they are expected to behave well, including in lessons. They like the new system in school where they receive rewards for good behaviour. Pupils said that they are confident adults will deal with any incidents of bullying effectively.

Pupils enjoy taking part in sports activities, including competitions with other schools. Pupils value their visits to local places of interest, such as museums and castles. However, they have limited chances to learn about the different cultures, faiths and traditions in wider British society.

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

Leaders have designed a school curriculum that reflects the breadth of the national curriculum. They have set out what pupils should learn in each subject every half term. However, in some subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers are not using these plans well enough to make sure that pupils' learning builds up over time. Teachers do not routinely check and ensure that pupils are learning and remembering the curriculum in the right order. Consequently, pupils' progress through the planned curriculum is variable. For example, in science and history, the work in pupils' books

shows little evidence of pupils improving their knowledge and understanding from one year to the next.

Leaders make learning to read a top priority for the school. Children begin learning phonics in the early years. Skilled teaching of reading means that most pupils read well and can use their knowledge of phonics to tackle new words. Teachers read to pupils often and they encourage pupils to read at home, from a broad range of books, for pleasure.

Leaders recently made changes to the structure of mathematics and English lessons in key stage 2. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially in mathematics. Teachers are better able to make sure that pupils build on their previous knowledge step by step.

Children entering the early years settle into school life quickly. Teachers encourage them to be confident and happy as they learn new skills and play together. This includes those children with SEND. Accurate, early identification of pupils with SEND leads to effective support for these pupils' needs throughout their time in the school.

Pupils generally behave sensibly and show respect for one another and staff in the school. Pupils told the inspectors that they really like having an extended play area. This ensures that they can play football without having to worry about accidentally hurting other pupils if a ball goes astray.

Competitive sports activities support pupils in being active and healthy and developing their social skills. Pupils have the chance to learn to play musical instruments, including the ukulele and African drums. The recent easing of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions means that more activities can take place outside of school, including residential trips. However, pupils do not learn enough about different faiths, cultures and traditions within British society. This limits their understanding and appreciation of diversity within the wider world.

Governors know the school and its community well. With support from the local authority, they have ensured that there is strong, strategic leadership of the school during a period of change.

Staff feel respected and valued in school. They really appreciate the additional support and direction from the new leadership team. Leaders take into consideration staff's workload, well-being and work-life balance when making decisions.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the development of the school's curriculum in relation to science and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that there is a school-wide culture of safeguarding. All staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff know precisely what to do and whom to contact if they suspect that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff have regular and up-to-date training, including in child protection and first aid. They know the importance of recognising from the earliest possible moment that a child may be at risk.

Pupils learn how to be safe, particularly when online. They know that they must always tell an adult if they come across something inappropriate. They are aware of potential dangers if using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics is not effective enough in ensuring that pupils build on their knowledge and skills systematically. Teachers do not follow leaders' ambitious curriculum closely enough. This means that pupils do not gain sufficient depth of knowledge to be well prepared for the next stage in education. Leaders should ensure that teachers plan and deliver carefully sequenced learning across all subject areas so as to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Leaders do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn about social and cultural diversity in their society. This means that pupils are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that the taught curriculum and wider enrichment opportunities are effective in supporting pupils' social and cultural development.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2012.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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| Unique reference number | 112302 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10210967 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 39 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Linette Hall |
| Headteacher | Lynn Dobinson |
| Website | culgaith.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There is an interim leadership team in place to cover the absence of the substantive headteacher.
- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the acting headteacher, consultant headteacher and six members of the governing body.
- The inspectors held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record of checks on staff suitability to work with pupils. The inspectors met with

the designated safeguarding leader and checked how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in some other subjects and spoke to leaders about it.
- The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including free-text comments. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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