

Inspection of a good school: Cartmel Priory Church of England School

Headless Cross, Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 7SA

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

Cartmel Priory Church of England School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a harmonious school where pupils flourish. They are asked to 'live life to the full'. Pupils enjoy being part of a close-knit community. They are proud to belong to the school. They are typically courteous and kind.

Pupils feel safe in this caring environment. They told inspectors that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and decisively. Pupils said that there are many adults whom they can go to if they have any worries or concerns.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations set by leaders and teachers to achieve their best. They enjoy a rich curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also benefit from teachers' high expectations and well-crafted support. 'The Haven' is a welcoming space where pupils benefit from a more personalised curriculum.

Pupils enjoy visits to places of interest and the opportunity to experience other cultures. Educational visits include those to a Buddhist temple, the theatre and outdoor pursuits centres. Pupils are taught reflection and mindfulness. Form time is punctuated by a 'thought for the day', when pupils are asked to 'choose kind'. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders have developed a broad curriculum with a balance of academic and vocational subjects. In key stage 4, the proportion of pupils following the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects has increased significantly this year. The curriculum in most subjects is ambitious and enables pupils to develop significant knowledge and understanding by building well on their prior learning. The curriculum in these subjects also focuses well on developing relevant vocabulary. In many subjects, teachers show good subject knowledge and pupils readily recall key information and the vocabulary that they have learned.

In a minority of subjects, pupils do not have the same opportunities to develop their learning and subject-specific vocabulary. For example, some of the resources used by teachers to support pupils' learning of the curriculum provide insufficient opportunities to extend pupils' understanding. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve the depth of understanding that they should.

Assessment strategies are used well by teachers, so that pupils progress through the curriculum. Pupils are regularly asked to recall and retrieve information that they have learned. This helps teachers to fully understand what has been understood and retained in pupils' long-term memory. Teachers use assessment information well to adjust how topics are taught.

Pupils who join the school unable to read fluently are quickly and effectively supported to catch up. Year 7 pupils are regular visitors to the vast library. They benefit from a structured programme of reading for pleasure.

Pupils typically behave well, including during social times. They show consideration and respect for each other and for visitors. Teachers challenge pupils to continually maintain positive behaviour through the 'focus of the fortnight' initiative. Pupils highly value the rewards on offer. Lessons are rarely disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour.

Pupils show their care and empathy for the local and wider community through charitable work. Pupils embrace the many leadership opportunities, including the chance to be head boy or head girl, library assistant or mathematics mentor. They benefit from a well-developed curriculum to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils in Year 11 said that they feel confident and well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. They benefit from working with local companies that share expertise in many areas, including in technology.

Leaders have robust systems in place to accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils are well supported by staff. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers, and this group of pupils achieve well.

The school is well led and managed. Members of the governing body are highly committed to the school community. Teachers feel well supported with their workload and well-being, and are proud to work at the school. Governors understand the school's context well and have provided effective support and challenge for leaders during the pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Teachers and other adults working in the school are trained well to spot any signs of abuse and neglect. Leaders actively engage external agencies to effectively support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Pupils are taught how to deal with the potential dangers they may face in the local area. Leaders ensure that training for adults in school is informed by the key issues that they have dealt with previously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their learning and subject-specific vocabulary. Consequently, some pupils do not learn some of the key knowledge and vocabulary that leaders want them to. Some pupils do not achieve the depth of understanding that they otherwise could. Leaders should ensure that in these subjects, teachers design learning that enables pupils to develop significant knowledge and understanding by building well on their earlier content.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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

Unique reference number	137338
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10212510
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Louise Shrapnel
Headteacher	Sarah Beestone
Website	www.cartmelprioryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There are no pupils currently attending alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records and discussed the actions that leaders have taken to protect the most vulnerable pupils who are at risk, including through the agencies with which the school works. Inspectors also examined a range of evidence on safeguarding, including whether leaders have appropriate vetting checks for adults who work in the school. Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils to consider whether they felt safe in school, and whom they would go to if they needed support.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese. Inspectors met with a representative of the federation. Inspectors also held meetings with a range of staff and groups of pupils in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey. This included free-text responses from parents and carers. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annabel Bolt

Ofsted Inspector

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