

Inspection of a good school: Plumbland Church of England School

School Lane, Parsonby, Aspatria, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 2DQ

Inspection date:

7 June 2022

Outcome

Plumbland Church of England School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy attending each day. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. These positive relationships, along with effective pastoral support, help pupils to feel safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 have positive attitudes to learning. Around the school, pupils are polite and well mannered. Pupils support one another in class and are respectful of each other's differences.

Pupils said that bullying is rare. They explained that leaders deal with bullying quickly and effectively. Staff make sure that any incidents of bullying do not reoccur.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Overall, pupils achieve well. Pupils learn about the importance of resilience when learning new or unfamiliar topics and concepts.

Pupils enjoy taking on a wide range of extra responsibilities. During their time in school, all pupils have the opportunity to become members of the school council. Most recently, the whole school community came together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Pupils' artwork, based on sustainability and recycling, was selected from thousands of schools nationally. Pupils were proud to see their artwork screened onto a silk flag and flown at the Jubilee Pageant.

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

Leaders at this small school have devised an ambitious and interesting curriculum. They have ensured that all subject curriculums successfully build on the skills and experiences that children acquire in the early years. Pupils who leave at the end of Year 6 are well prepared to move on to high school.

Governors know the school well. They are effective in holding leaders to account for the quality of education that the school provides for its pupils. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who need additional support get the timely help that they need.

In many subjects, including mathematics and English, leaders have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This means that teachers know what subject content they need to teach to pupils and by when. In most subjects, including in the early years, the design of the curriculum supports children and pupils to build on what they already know and can do. Teachers check that pupils are confident with earlier learning before they move on with new learning. This supports pupils to progress through the curriculum. Nearly all children in the early years, and most pupils in key stages 1 and 2, achieve well across many areas of the curriculum.

That said, the curriculum is not finalised in a very small number of subjects. In one or two subject areas, leaders are still developing and refining their approach to how best to deliver new learning. They are thinking about the order in which this new learning should be delivered. In these subjects, as leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking, a few pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

Overall, teachers use leaders' assessment systems well to identify any misconceptions that pupils may have. In most subjects, teachers use the information about how well pupils remember the content of the curriculum to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.

In lessons, pupils behave well. Older pupils model positive behaviours to their younger classmates. Children in the early years quickly develop strong behaviour for learning by working alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are able to get on with delivering new learning without interruptions.

Leaders have made sure that reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff have been well trained to deliver an effective early reading and phonics programme. Teachers deliver new sounds in a logical order. Children and pupils quickly learn to apply their phonics knowledge to their reading. They are keen to take home books to practise the new sounds they have learned in class. Any pupil who falls behind in their reading receives timely support to help them catch up with their peers.

The wider personal development curriculum is a strength of the school. For example, pupils learn about the wide range of religions practised in the United Kingdom. They learn to understand the importance of tolerance and respect of the views and beliefs of others. Pupils also engage in sporting competitions with other schools across the region. Trips and visits are exceptionally well planned to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Older pupils explained that they are very excited about their upcoming residential trip to Scotland at the end of the summer term 2022.

Staff are very happy in their roles. They use words such as 'incredible' and 'lovely' when they describe school leaders and what it is like to work in the school. Staff said that leaders make sure that they have the time, training and skills necessary to do their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are proactive in their safeguarding duties. In this small school, leaders and staff know pupils and their families very well. All staff who work in the school receive relevant and regular safeguarding training. Staff have the skills that they need to spot any potential signs of neglect, harm or abuse. Leaders successfully work with a number of external agencies to keep pupils safe and to provide timely support to families.

Through the well-planned curriculum, pupils learn to keep themselves safe while using the internet. They also learn about how to manage personal risk through the forest school curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. They are in the process of refining exactly what pupils should learn and in what order. This is hindering some pupils from learning all that they could. In the remaining few subjects, leaders should ensure that they refine the curriculum further to identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils should develop in each year group.

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 September 2013.

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	112275
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10211256
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Taylor
Headteacher	Claire McKie
Website	www.plumbland.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England primary school. The most recent section 48 inspection was in February 2017.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and several members of staff.
- The inspectors met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors considered the free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers after school to gather their opinions of the school.

- The inspectors spoke with a range of staff to gather their opinions about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors checked staff recruitment procedures. They also checked records of staff safeguarding training. Throughout the inspection, the inspectors spoke with members of staff about their safeguarding training and checked on how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtimes and at lunchtime. They spoke with a range of pupils to gather their views about behaviour and safety in school. The lead inspector listened to children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and physical education. They met with those who oversee these subjects. The inspectors also spoke with teachers and visited lessons. They spoke with pupils and looked at examples of their work.

Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sally Timmons

Her Majesty's Inspector

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