

Inspection of a good school: Hallbankgate Village School

Hallbankgate, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 2NJ

Inspection date: 4 October 2022

Outcome

Hallbankgate Village School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and confident learners. They are proud to attend this small, nurturing school. Pupils told inspectors that this is a great school to belong to if you want to make friends.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils are hardworking. They achieve well and listen attentively in lessons. Pupils know that adults will help them to improve their learning and succeed in everything that they do. They know that making 'marvellous' mistakes helps them to learn. Pupils enjoy responding to teachers' requests to 'tick it or fix it!'

Pupils enjoy their playtimes and get on well with each other. They understand what bullying is, and know to tell a trusted adult if it should happen, because it will be sorted out quickly. Pupils feel safe in school.

There are lots of activities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the after-school sports clubs and gardening club. Older pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility such as a learning councillor, or as a buddy for children in the early years.

Pupils appreciate the spacious school grounds. They also value the beautiful countryside that surrounds them. Pupils know the importance of looking after their environment. They make regular use of the village amenities like the church and the library.

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

Leaders and governors have developed an ambitious and exciting curriculum. All pupils learn from this curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In all subjects of the national curriculum, leaders have set out the most important knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn it.

As a result, leaders are ensuring that pupils' knowledge builds systematically from the early years to Year 6. In most subjects, pupils know and remember more over time.

In some subjects, such as reading and mathematics, teachers make effective checks to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on to new learning. However, in some other subjects, teachers' checks are less effective. This prevents teachers from making sure that pupils understand what has been taught. Some pupils do not remember their learning as well in these subjects.

The curriculum in the early years prepares children well for Year 1. Adults introduce children to plenty of songs, rhymes and stories. They encourage children to talk about their thoughts and ideas. These activities enable children to expand their vocabulary.

Leaders have introduced a new early reading programme. They have ensured that all adults are trained well to deliver this new approach to phonics. Teachers make frequent checks to make sure that pupils are securing the necessary phonics knowledge. Pupils who find reading difficult receive effective and timely support. In most cases, pupils read books that match the sounds and letters that they are learning. However, at times, they are given books that do not help them to build their fluency or confidence.

Teachers are passionate about reading. Their infectious enthusiasm encourages pupils to read widely. Pupils know a wide range of authors and were thrilled to meet some of them at an event they attended recently. They enjoy their regular trips to the village library to choose a reading book. Pupils know that reading lots of books gives them the knowledge that they need to do well in school.

Leaders are experts in identifying pupils with SEND. They ensure that training and resources are readily available so that staff can provide effective support to pupils with SEND. Teachers carefully adapt their teaching to make sure that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND are achieving well.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are respectful to their teachers and to each other. These positive relationships underpin the calm and productive classroom environments in which pupils learn without disruption.

Leaders ensure that opportunities for pupils' wider development are built into the curriculum. For example, pupils have visited many different places of worship. They spoke knowledgeably about Black History Month. Older pupils have an appropriate understanding of issues around race, equality and difference. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

All staff that responded to the staff survey said that they are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by governors and leaders in managing their workload and well-being. Staff particularly value the opportunities they get to develop as subject leaders.

Governors know what the school does well and where it needs to develop further. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that staff are trained well. Staff are vigilant in all matters relating to the safety of pupils. They know what to look out for and who to tell if they have concerns. Leaders respond quickly to any issues that are raised. This ensures that pupils and their families receive prompt support when needed.

Pupils are taught appropriate strategies to keep themselves safe, including when working or playing online. They know who to speak to if they are worried about anything that they have seen or heard online. Pupils learn about the dangers of playing near water or with fire. Older pupils learn to ride their bikes safely on the roads.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some pupils at the early stage of reading are provided with reading books that are not matched carefully enough to the sounds they already know. When this happens, it hampers their ability to read fluently. Leaders should ensure that teachers select books for children and pupils that help them to practise what they know about sounds and letters so that they become fluent and confident readers.
- In some subjects, staff do not check carefully enough that pupils have understood what has been taught. This means that their prior learning is sometimes not secure when they move on to new content. Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, staff check pupils' learning and adapt their teaching to make up for any gaps in knowledge or understanding.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 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.

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	112417
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10226149
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicola Potts
Headteacher	Clare Hutton
Website	www.hallbankgate.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection of the school 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 held discussions with the headteacher and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to the headteacher in her capacity as special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body and to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects early reading, 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 examples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding documents and spoke with staff about their safeguarding knowledge and responsibilities.
- Inspectors spoke to a small group of parents at the start of the day. Inspectors scrutinised the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also looked at the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Garry White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Barbara Dutton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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