

# Inspection of a good school: Dalton St Mary's CofE Primary School

Coronation Drive, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria LA15 8QR

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

## **Outcome**

Dalton St Mary's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Children in the early years settle happily into well-established routines. They enjoy playing and learning with their friends. Pupils know that adults care about them. There is always someone that they can trust to speak with. This helps pupils to feel safe at school. Any falling out with their friends is always resolved. Leaders act quickly to stop any bullying, should it occur.

Pupils work hard and try their best to live up to the high expectations that staff have of their achievement and behaviour. Most pupils achieve and behave well. They talk enthusiastically about all the different topics they are learning. Pupils use technology confidently in a range of subjects to support their learning.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities that leaders provide, such as trips to the theatre and to local places of interest. Residential trips help to develop pupils' confidence and resilience when they are trying something new. Pupils also enjoy the many clubs that they can join. Older pupils take their responsibilities as digital leaders and prefects seriously. They appreciate the trust that leaders place in them to be role models for the younger children. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and would recommend it to others.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. It meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The key knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is delivered in well-ordered steps from the early years to Year 6. Knowledge builds over time for individual subjects. The curriculum provides opportunity for pupils to practise what they are learning and to make links between subjects. This helps pupils to use what they know when they are learning something new. Most pupils achieve well.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who need additional help. Skilled staff support these pupils successfully. Pupils with SEND access all that school life has to offer. The use of efficient technological equipment enables them to learn alongside their classmates. The help that pupils with SEND receive enables them to achieve well across a broad range of subjects.

Staff have the knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum confidently. They work with other colleagues to share ideas and expertise. Effective assessment strategies are used to check what pupils know and can do. This helps teachers to identify what pupils need to learn next. In a small number of subjects, some pupils struggle to recall key vocabulary knowledge taught previously. This hinders their progress in these subjects.

Reading has a high priority across the school. In the early years, children become familiar with traditional stories. Pupils quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. The books that they read match the sounds they are learning. Pupils use their phonic knowledge successfully to decode unfamiliar words. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Pupils who find reading challenging, including pupils in key stage 2, benefit from the help that they receive from skilled staff. Pupils talk avidly about their favourite books and the stories that their teachers read to them. Older pupils choose their own texts from a wide range of books, including books online. All pupils are actively encouraged to read widely and often across a broad range of subjects.

Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They behave well during lunchtime and play times. Pupils enjoy school and being with their friends. There are very few disruptions during lessons. This enables pupils to focus on their learning.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Visitors to school and trips beyond the local area help to deepen pupils' understanding of other places and cultures. Pupils learn to value difference and know that it means to be a good friend. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect while striving to be the very best they can.

Governors are well informed about the school. They use their knowledge effectively to hold leaders to account for the quality of education that they provide. Staff are very complimentary about the consideration leaders give to both their workload and well-being. Leaders and staff are proud to work at Dalton St Mary's.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The training that staff receive enables them to identify quickly any changes in a pupil's demeanour. They carefully follow the school procedures and promptly report any concerns about the welfare of a pupil. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help and support they need. Leaders work with charities and a range of public services to enhance pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils also know how to report any

situations that make them feel uncomfortable. Pupils are taught how to use the internet safely.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, some pupils have gaps in their vocabulary knowledge. This hinders the progress that these pupils make. Leaders should ensure that the key vocabulary that pupils need to know is fully embedded before new learning is introduced, to enable all pupils to achieve well.

## **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 May 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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112412
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269020
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jill Corris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Hughes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.daltonstmarys.cumbria.sch.uk">www.daltonstmarys.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses alternative provision.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school's most recent Section 48 inspection was undertaken by the Diocese of Carlisle in March 2020.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and staff and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. She spoke with staff to check how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- During the inspection, the inspector spoke with representatives from the governing body. The inspector also spoke with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and staff.

- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to the curriculum. She carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- She also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- She talked to pupils about their experiences of the school.
- The inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the day to gather their views about the school. The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with staff to gather their views about their workload and well-being. She considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. The inspector also gathered the views of pupils during the inspection and considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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