

Inspection of a good school: Holme St Cuthbert School

Mawbray, Maryport, Cumbria CA15 6QZ

Inspection date:

1 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this small and welcoming school. They said that they value the relationships that they have with each other and with staff. They know that their friends and adults will notice if they are sad and will help them with any worries that they may have. Leaders and staff deal quickly and effectively with any bullying or hurtful behaviour that may occur. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them. They are polite and respectful. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning. However, expectations of pupils' academic achievement have not been high enough over time. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the curriculum from the early years to the end of Year 6. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have gaps in their knowledge and are not as prepared for new learning as they should be.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn outside the classroom and explore their local area. For example, they appreciate visits to the beach and to church, where they recently explored stained glass windows. They enjoy trips further afield such as to the theatre and a quarry. Pupils also enjoy the opportunity to compete with other schools and to attend events at local secondary schools. These different experiences help pupils to understand their place in the community.

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

Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum and have designed a broad curriculum from the early years to the end of Year 6. In most subjects, they have identified the important knowledge for pupils to learn and when. However, in some subjects, leaders

have not clarified what knowledge pupils should acquire and when. In these subjects, pupils have not built knowledge in a logical way over time.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who may have additional needs. Pupils with SEND are supported to help them to access the same curriculum as their classmates.

In most subjects, teachers have the knowledge and expertise that they need to teach the curriculum well. They make effective use of equipment and resources to support pupils' learning. They present information clearly and check pupils' learning. However, in some subjects, the activity choices that teachers make do not help pupils, including those with SEND, to learn the curriculum as well as they should. While teachers use quizzes and questions effectively to check pupils' knowledge in most subjects, in others, it is not as well developed.

Leaders have a sharp focus on reading and have prioritised reading from the early years to Year 6. Most pupils read often at home and in school. Leaders have successfully introduced a new phonics curriculum. Pupils learn sounds in a logical way. The books that they read contain the sounds and words that they have learned. Leaders quickly identify pupils who have gaps in their phonic knowledge. Pupils are supported effectively to catch up. This helps pupils to gain the knowledge that they need to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are friendly and considerate of each other. At playtimes, older pupils take responsibility for looking after playground equipment. They ensure that everyone is treated fairly and included. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They listen to their teachers and each other. This means that lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders ensure that there are opportunities for pupils' broader development. Some pupils are members of the school council. They contribute to making decisions in school. For example, they decide which charities they would like to raise funds for based on the interests of the pupils across the school. Younger pupils enjoy 'Welly Wednesday' and the opportunity to learn outdoors. These activities help pupils to develop resilience, independence, self-esteem and teamwork skills.

Leaders and governors know how to address the weaknesses in the curriculum and how to move the school forward. The new headteacher has taken swift and appropriate action, but it is early days to evaluate its impact. Leaders have taken steps to reduce workload, and they are considerate of staff's well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have training so that they can identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any signs that pupils may be suffering from abuse or neglect. Staff know how to report and record any concerns that they may have. Leaders act swiftly to access help for vulnerable pupils and follow up on referrals

appropriately. There is a mental health leader in school to support pupils. Leaders also access help from other agencies.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. For example, they know how to keep themselves safe near the sea and on and near roads.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including in the early years, leaders have not clarified the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire. They have also not thought carefully enough about the order that pupils learn it. This hinders some pupils from building knowledge well over time and means that they have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum clearly sets out the essential knowledge for pupils to learn and when they should learn it.
- In some subjects, including in the early years, leaders have not ensured that staff are supported to teach the curriculum as effectively as they should. This means that pupils, including those with SEND, do not learn the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff make well-reasoned choices of activities and resources to foster learning so that pupils, including those with SEND, know more and remember more of the curriculum.
- In some subjects, including in the early years, leaders have not established effective assessment strategies for teachers to use. This means that teachers are not sure if pupils have learned and remembered what was intended. Leaders should ensure that there are assessment strategies in place so that teachers can check what pupils know and remember and use this information to inform future teaching.

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 January 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	112112
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10226151
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tim Savelio
Headteacher	Claire Fleming
Website	www.hstcuth.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up the substantive post in January 2023.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders in school. They also spoke with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the surveys for staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector examined a range of safeguarding documentation. She checked how leaders ensure that safer recruitment procedures are in place. The inspector checked records of staff's safeguarding training. Inspectors also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in lessons and around school. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They also looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a trusted adult.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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