

Inspection of Bewcastle School

Roadhead, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 6PF

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Bewcastle School. They take great pleasure in playing in the school's beautiful grounds and appreciate the scenic location. Leaders' commitment to establish 'successful learning in a happy environment' has been realised. Pupils value the relationships that they have with each other and with staff. They are polite, well-mannered and respectful.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have completed a significant overhaul of the curriculum to help pupils to achieve well. Pupils are curious, committed to their learning and try their best. Most pupils achieve well.

Pupils benefit from the use of the school's swimming pool. Pupils, including children in the early years, have swimming lessons on site and learn how to keep themselves safe in the water.

Recently, a number of former pupils came to talk to current pupils about their experiences at school in the past. Pupils also visited an archive centre to find out more about key events that have happened in the school over time. These experiences help pupils to feel rooted in their local area.

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

Leaders have acted quickly to address the weaknesses in the school's curriculum identified in the previous inspection. They have established a new, coherent curriculum from the early years to the end of Year 6. They have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. However, in some subjects, leaders have not ensured that staff have had sufficient guidance to teach the new curriculum to mixed-age classes as effectively as they could. This means that some pupils do not recall some of their learning.

Leaders identify any additional needs that pupils may have quickly. Pupils with SEND are supported well to learn the same curriculum as their classmates. Leaders ensure that teachers adapt the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

Teachers check what pupils know and can remember. They use this information to shape future teaching. They choose appropriate activities to help pupils to learn curriculum content well. However, in some subjects, leaders have not ensured that staff provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop a secure understanding of the important knowledge and skills that they need for new learning. This means that some pupils are not as prepared for new learning as they could be.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and reading a wide range of books. Leaders have established an effective phonics

curriculum from the beginning of the Reception Year. Pupils learn sounds and letters in a logical order and use their phonics knowledge to accurately read new and unfamiliar words. They read books that contain the sounds and words that they know. This helps most pupils to read with confidence and fluency.

Pupils behave well. They are kind, thoughtful and considerate of each other and of adults. They listen to each other and to their teachers. They behave in a calm and sensible manner in lessons and at social times. They are welcoming to visitors and make sure that everyone is included.

Leaders have ensured that pupils have a wide range of experiences that extend beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils visit local community places such as the 'warm hub' and village church. Pupils also made a coronation flag for the village hall and hold regular community lunches, which are well attended by local residents. Pupils enjoy camping trips, outdoor activities and walks along the Cumbrian Way and Hadrian's Wall. They are also taking part in a local project to learn more about farming and diversity. Leaders also ensure that pupils experience life in the wider world. Pupils have visited an oriental museum in Durham and a gurdwara in Newcastle. These experiences help pupils to develop an understanding of and respect for other people.

There has been a period of turbulence in the leadership of the school. Governors appointed a substantive headteacher from the beginning of this academic year. This has brought stability to the school's leadership. Governors receive the information that they need to effectively hold leaders to account. They understand their roles and statutory duties. Leaders have prioritised staff's well-being. They are mindful of staff's workload, particularly as the staff team is small in number. Staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and are alert to any changes in their behaviour that may indicate that they may be suffering from harm. Leaders have ensured that staff have training to help them to identify signs of abuse and neglect. Staff know how to record and report any concerns that they may have. Leaders act on these in a timely manner. Leaders secure help from other agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They have a clear understanding of the potential risks and dangers online and what they can do if they are concerned about something that they see or hear.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that staff are sufficiently supported to teach and adapt the subject curriculums for mixed-age classes as effectively as they should. This hinders some pupils from building their knowledge well over time. Leaders should ensure that staff receive further training and support to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- In some subjects, leaders have not ensured that the work given to pupils enables them to develop secure knowledge in that subject. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as strongly as they should in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers give pupils work that deepens their knowledge and better prepares them for new learning.

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	112103
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10240194
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Davis
Headteacher	Matthew Dixon
Website	www.bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. There have also been some changes to the membership of the governing body.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no children in the Reception Year at the school.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 members of the governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also met 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 Ofsted survey for staff and for pupils.
- The lead inspector examined a range of safeguarding documentation. Inspectors 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 history. The lead inspector also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. Inspectors met leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. They also spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects and 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

Mark Hazzard

Ofsted Inspector

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