

Inspection of Culgaith C of E School

Culgaith, Culgaith, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1QL

Inspection dates:

7 to 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school. They see it as a friendly place where everyone is welcome. Pupils new to the school settle in quickly and soon make friends. In the early years, children's happy faces show how safe and secure they feel here. Parents and carers have plenty of positive things to say about the school.

There are high expectations for pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils work hard and listen attentively in lessons. Pupils have access to plenty of resources to help them with their learning, such as dictionaries, books and technology. However, they know that they can always ask their teachers for help if there is something that they do not understand. In all year groups, pupils learn and achieve well.

Pupils understand and follow the school's rules and routines. Children in the early years share toys and resources and treat them carefully. Pupils walk sensibly from assembly back to their classrooms. Older pupils show care and consideration for younger ones when they share the playground at breaktimes. These attitudes help to make the school a calm and orderly place.

The amazing opportunities for pupils' personal development bely the school's small size. Pupils bubble with enthusiasm when they talk about the range of activities on offer. For example, they learn to sail, ride ponies and to take part in debates with other schools. Older pupils look forward excitedly to residential stays in this country and abroad. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond their primary school.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully improved the quality of education. Pupils, including those with SEND, now benefit from an exciting, ambitious curriculum that covers a broad range of subjects.

Careful consideration has been given to the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn by the time that they leave the school. In almost all subjects, this key knowledge has been broken down into small steps that pupils learn in a logical order from the early years to Year 6. This ensures that pupils build new learning firmly and securely on what they already know. In a very small number of subjects, these smaller steps are less clearly defined. This makes it more difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils learn everything that they need to know in these subjects.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. In the early years, children begin learning about phonics right from the start. Each day they add to the letters and sounds that have learned. This continues in Year 1 with more complex groups of sounds. Well-trained staff know how to ensure that pupils' reading books contain only the sounds that pupils have learned so far. This helps pupils to develop confidence and independence in their reading. Any pupils at risk of falling behind receive prompt

help to catch up. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers. They enjoy selecting books from the wide selections in the school library and in their class reading areas. Across the school, pupils develop a real love of reading and achieve well, including those with SEND.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. The learning that they receive is interesting, engaging and memorable. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to keep revisiting and practising earlier learning. The school's well-organised curriculum ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes build on what they already know and deepen their understanding over time.

Teachers check regularly to make sure that pupils have understood new knowledge before they move on to the next learning. This ensures that pupils build up knowledge securely.

The school makes effective use of information gathered through assessments, for example to identify when pupils may have missing knowledge. This enables the school to make any necessary adjustments to teaching.

Pupils who may have SEND are identified quickly. These pupils benefit from appropriate adaptations, where needed, to enable them to access the curriculum. Effective communication between the school, parents and a range of professionals secures expert help for pupils if it is necessary. Pupils with SEND achieve similarly to other pupils in school.

There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils commit to their learning and are respectful to staff and to each other. For example, pupils get on with their work without distracting other people. In discussions, pupils take care to listen to what each other has to say. At times, they even remind each other gently not to interrupt when someone else is speaking. These sensible attitudes make a positive contribution to pupils' ability to learn in lessons.

Since the last inspection, the school has put in place impressive provision for pupils' development beyond the academic. Through a range of activities, pupils learn that the world is full of diversity and difference. For example, they visit places of worship as part of their work to understand faiths and cultures. They learn more about school life in an African village when they raise funds and contribute books for its library. Pupils learn more about democracy and government when they visit the Houses of Parliament.

The school goes above and beyond the expected in ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to develop individual interests and talents such as sports, cookery and farming. Pupils make a real difference to their community, for example by clearing and tidying the village's recreation area so that families can participate in sports events together. Pupils participate in voluntary work through programmes such as The Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Award. These experiences help to develop pupils' character and confidence, and prepare them very well for the next stage in their education.

Governors carry out a range of activities to assure themselves that the school's systems are working well. This has helped them to ensure that the quality of education has improved since the school was last inspected. When making decisions, governors and leaders are considerate of the impact on staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, there is insufficient information about some of the smaller components of knowledge that pupils need to learn. This makes it more difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils learn everything that they need to know in these subjects. The school should ensure that in all subjects, the curriculum contains enough information to enable teachers to ensure that pupils learn all of the key knowledge that they need.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112302
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10240668
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linette Hall
Headteacher	Lynn Dobinson
Website	www.culgaith.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new substantive headteacher has been appointed.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school and is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. The school was last inspected under section 48 in 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be in 2024.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector also met with governors.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and spoke on the telephone to a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at a range of pupils' books. To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspectors also chatted to a few parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- The inspectors spoke to some pupils about school life.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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