

# Inspection of Dent CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Laning, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5QJ

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Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Pupils thrive in this small and joyful school. They form strong and trusting bonds with staff and with each other. Pupils treat each other, and staff, with kindness and respect. Children in the early years settle into school life well. They are supported to learn the rules and routines. This helps them to learn and play cooperatively alongside each other.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and try their best. They listen attentively and confidently answer questions in lessons. Pupils typically achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities that the school provides for them beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they take part eagerly in photography, woodwork and computer coding clubs. Pupils in key stage 2 organise lunchtime activities, such as football club, for other pupils. These experiences enable pupils to develop exciting new interests and find undiscovered talents.

Pupils flourish in their various roles and responsibilities. These include acting as pupil parliament members and lunchtime helpers. Pupils are proud to care for their local and wider community. They welcome being involved in community projects, such as making soup, chutney and blankets for the elderly. Pupils also learn that they can make a positive difference by raising money for charities.

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

The school has recently overhauled its curriculum. It has diligently considered the needs and interests of all its pupils and has developed an ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, the school has carefully considered what it wants pupils to know and the order in which subject knowledge will be taught. This is similar in the early years, where the curriculum in many areas of learning identifies the key knowledge that children should learn in readiness for key stage 1.

In a few subjects, including some areas of learning in the early years, the school is still refining its work to ensure that teachers are clear about the key knowledge that pupils should gain. In these subjects, teachers do not routinely place the right emphasis on the knowledge that the pupils need for future learning. This sometimes prevents pupils from developing detailed understanding and making connections with what they have learned before.

Teachers typically deliver the curriculum well. They explain new concepts with clarity, and they use a range of strategies to check on pupils' understanding. In many subjects, teachers use effective strategies to check that pupils have retained important knowledge over time. However, in some subjects, the school is in the process of developing its approaches to assessment. In these subjects, the

approaches to assessment sometimes do not give teachers all the information that they need to check how well pupils have secured earlier learning. This prevents some pupils from achieving all that they could.

Pupils' individual needs, interests and talents are known well at this school. The school quickly and effectively identifies pupils' additional needs, including pupils with SEND. These pupils benefit from well-tailored teaching so that they can thrive in all aspects of their development.

The school prioritises reading. It invests in high-quality and engaging books that pupils love to read. Pupils look forward to the special time each day when adults read to them. Books are everywhere. Pupils proudly and confidently showed inspectors the many books and resources that staff set out for them to use. Pupils throughout the school read books that match their reading knowledge. This helps them to be confident and fluent readers. Staff have the expertise they need to identify if a pupil falls behind in their learning of phonics. If this happens, pupils receive the help that they need to catch up quickly.

Pupils, including children in the early years, are positive about their school and their learning. They enjoy learning new things and take an active part in their own learning. Pupils play cooperatively with each other at playtimes. On the rare occasion when a pupil forgets to follow the school rules, staff quickly and sensitively remind them how to behave.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to extend pupils' learning beyond their immediate environment. The school organises a range of trips and visits from speakers to help pupils to better understand the wider world. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They learn about important values, such as democracy and tolerance. Pupils recognise that rules are there to keep them safe. These experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Governors use their expertise to provide the school with effective support and challenge. They display a strong sense of purpose and passion to bring about the best possible outcomes for the pupils, parents, carers and staff of the school.

The school is considerate of staff's workload and well-being. For example, it considers how best to implement new initiatives without overburdening staff. Staff told inspectors they feel the school is alert and mindful of their well-being. They feel valued and supported.

## **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 few subjects, including in the early years, the school has not identified clearly enough the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that teachers do not emphasise and revisit some important ideas and concepts. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not develop the detailed knowledge that they should. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking so that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn and when this should be taught.
- Approaches to assessment are underdeveloped in a few subjects. This hinders how well some teachers check that pupils have retained earlier learning. The school should finalise its approaches to checking pupils' learning in these remaining subjects. This is to ensure that pupils have secure foundations on which to build 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112331
<b>Local authority</b>	Westmorland and Furness
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200833
<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>	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kathleen Cairns
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Prescott
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dent.cumbria.sch.uk">www.dent.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school age range has changed since the previous inspection. The school now provides provision for three-year-old children.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and several other staff have been newly appointed to the school.
- This is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Carlisle. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in November 2021. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2026.

## 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 first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted survey for pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils in meetings and around the school at lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the online survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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