

# Inspection of Borrowdale CofE Primary School

Borrowdale, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 5XG

---

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

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?**

Everyone is valued at this small and family-centred school. Pupils know that staff care for them and will support them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils are happy here. Many pupils join at different points in their schooling. Staff make sure that they get to know pupils and their families quickly to help them to settle in well.

The school has high expectations of pupils' academic achievements and of their personal development. Pupils aim to please their teachers and told inspectors about the rewards that they receive, including prizes and a coveted headteacher's award. They look forward to showcasing their achievements each week during a special assembly. Typically, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful of others and know that it is important to make everyone feel included, regardless of any differences that they have. Pupils relish the rich range of wider opportunities that the school provides. For example, they spoke fondly about after-school activities, including running, writing and cookery clubs. Pupils benefit from many trips that enhance their learning of the curriculum. For instance, a recent visit to a local valley has helped them to fully understand the features of rivers.

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

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. The school has reshaped the curriculum due to pupils' changing needs. It has thought carefully about how the curriculum aligns with small, mixed-age classes. This helps most pupils to learn well.

In many subjects, the school has identified the small steps of knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this content will be delivered. However, in a few subjects, and areas of learning in the early years, subject-specific content is not as well defined. This hinders some pupils from acquiring all of the knowledge that they should in these aspects of the curriculum.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. In the main, this helps them to deliver the curriculum well, such as by explaining new content clearly. In most subjects, staff use assessment strategies to check that pupils learn what was intended. Generally, they select suitable learning activities that help pupils to build their knowledge. However, on occasion, these activities are not effective in assisting pupils in their learning. This means that some pupils' engagement deteriorates, which prevents them from learning all that they should.

The school promptly identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. It focuses on removing any barriers to learning that may exist. For example, the school liaises with external agencies, and with parents and carers, to enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum and enrichment offer.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Starting from the beginning of the Nursery Year, staff foster pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils benefit from many visits to the local library. The school has started a reading challenge to encourage pupils to read widely and often. Pupil librarians recommend their favourite books to other pupils.

From the beginning of the Reception Year, children follow a well-structured phonics programme. Pupils practise their reading using books that contain the sounds that they already know. Staff provide additional help, should pupils find reading difficult. This enables most pupils to develop into fluent readers in readiness for key stage 2.

The school is successful in helping pupils to attend regularly. It works closely with pupils and their families to understand any reasons for low attendance. A range of strategies, including the school's own minibus service, have a positive impact on attendance. Across school, the learning environment is usually calm and focused. Pupils listen to staff's instructions. They typically engage well, though some low-level disruption occurs when learning activities are not well chosen. Children in the early years benefit from clear routines. They are included in all aspects of school life.

The school supports pupils' broader development well. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They develop their leadership skills through roles, such as 'mini techies'. Pupils learn that they can contribute positively to society. For example, they regularly visit care homes and the local church. Pupils understand the importance of collecting food for those who are less fortunate than themselves.

The governing body is highly invested in the school. It provides appropriate levels of support and challenge, with a focus on ensuring that pupils receive the quality of education that they deserve. Staff feel very much part of a team. The school helps them to fulfil their roles well, such as by providing additional time for them to complete their duties. Parents commended the school to inspectors. They said that it sees their children as individuals and helps them to thrive in school and beyond.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, including areas of learning in the early years, the school is still refining the important information that pupils should learn. This restricts the depth of some pupils' knowledge. The school should determine the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught.
- At times, teachers do not select the most appropriate activities to deliver curriculum content. This causes some pupils to lose focus during lessons and, as a result, they do not learn as well as they could. The school should support teachers in choosing activities that help pupils to learn and achieve well.

## 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>	112333
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294293
<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>	28
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Cooke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ralf Smits
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.borrowdaleschool.com">www.borrowdaleschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This Church of England school is in the Diocese of Carlisle. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place before the end of 2025.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

## 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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. In each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with teachers and with some

pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult. He discussed reading with a group of older pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school, including at lunchtime. They spoke with several groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey to consider.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and documents pertaining to pupils' behaviour and levels of attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and their well-being. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors met with some parents at the start and end of the school day.

### Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Swift	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024