

Inspection of Hensingham Primary School

Main Street, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 8QZ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Amanda Brotherhood. This school is part of Cumbria Education Trust. This means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lorryne Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by George Beveridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to belong to their school. They described it as a welcoming and friendly place. Pupils trust staff to help them to overcome any difficulties that they may have.

Pupils typically behave well, including at social times. Older pupils keep a watchful eye over their younger 'buddies' at lunchtime. This helps Reception-aged children to learn the well-established routines that contribute to the calm and orderly school environment.

Children quickly settle in the early years. They begin to recognise the value of cooperation and negotiation. The school supports pupils well to understand the richness of their local and wider community. Pupils learn to celebrate diversity. For example, older pupils recognise how important it is to value people's differences to help them to get along with others successfully.

The school expects all pupils to succeed academically. It provides additional support to enable pupils to achieve well from their differing starting points. This includes providing places, such as the 'Hive', to help pupils to focus on their learning more effectively when this is needed. As a result, pupils, especially those with special educational needs and or/disabilities (SEND), flourish at the school and they grow in confidence.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It has thought carefully about the key knowledge that pupils need to learn as they progress from the Nursery Year to the end of key stage 2. Through the effective curriculum, pupils build up a rich body of useful knowledge over time.

Teachers have a secure understanding of the school's agreed curriculum and the order in which key content should be taught. They are clear about which learning they need to focus on with pupils in their classes. However, sometimes, teachers do not deliver the curriculum as well as they should. For example, from time to time, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their learning to make sure that their understanding is secure. As a result, some pupils find it more difficult to recall important information when they need it. This adds to the difficulty that some pupils experience when making sense of new learning.

The school expects teachers to revisit learning when they recognise that pupils' understanding is not as secure as it could be. However, occasionally, teachers move on to new learning before pupils are ready. Consequently, some pupils continue to have misconceptions or they develop gaps in their knowledge. As a result, these pupils sometimes lose confidence, which hinders how well they achieve.

The school places a high priority on reading. This begins in the early years and is evident, for example, in how intently children listen while their teachers read to them at story time. As pupils progress through the school, they explore a wide range of contemporary and classic literature with their teachers. Older pupils develop sophisticated tastes in reading because of exposure to the high-quality texts that they experience in class.

Teachers adhere closely to the school's phonics programme, which begins in the Reception Year. Pupils benefit from additional support if they find reading difficult. Most pupils develop the fluency and accuracy that they need to cope with the demands of the key stage 3 curriculum by the time that they are in Year 6. However, there is inconsistency in how well teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build up their reading knowledge as effectively as they could. From time to time, this affects how well they access the rest of the curriculum.

Staff swiftly and accurately identify pupils' additional needs, including SEND. Pupils with SEND achieve well across the school.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school. Disruption to learning is rare. However, the school is not complacent. It responds quickly when pupils' attendance or behaviour begin to cause concern. Pupils benefit from carefully targeted support to ensure that they get back on track as quickly as possible.

The school ensures that the curriculum provides ample opportunities for pupils' wider development. For example, pupils are supported well to build up their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They learn how to recognise and develop healthy relationships. Pupils also know what steps to take to protect themselves while online. Year 6 pupils told inspectors that they were excited about moving on to secondary school and that they feel well prepared for this transition.

The school benefits from the expertise and the support of the trust. This has been particularly valuable while the school has experienced some turbulence in staffing. Those responsible for governance focus on making sure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. They also ensure that staff workload is not adversely affected while new initiatives are introduced.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not deliver some aspects of the curriculum consistently well. This makes it harder for pupils to recall key knowledge when they need it. It also makes it more difficult for pupils to learn new information. The school should

make sure that teachers are equipped to support pupils to build up a secure body of knowledge across the curriculum.

- The school does not ensure that teachers consider sufficiently well how secure pupils' knowledge is before moving on to new learning. At times, this includes in reading. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the building blocks for future learning are not fully in place. The school should ensure that assessment strategies support teachers to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and 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

Unique reference number	147597
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10321465
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	George Beveridge
CEO	Lorrayne Hughes
Headteacher	Amanda Brotherhood
Website	www.hensingham.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previous inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Hensingham Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Hensingham Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- There was a period of interim leadership before the current headteacher took up her post in September 2023.

Information about this inspection

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 educational provision.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with members of the trust, including the CEO, and directors of education. She also spoke with members of the local advisory board.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- 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.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and art and design. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. They also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. An inspector also scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

Ofsted Inspector

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