

Inspection of Kirkland Church of England Academy

Kirkland, Frizington, Cumbria CA26 3XU

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Katie Robinson. This school is part of The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Claire Render, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Ballard. There is also an executive headteacher, who is responsible for this school and two other schools.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive and feel happy at this school. They look forward to their lessons and to spending time with their friends. Pupils are proud of their school, particularly the wider opportunities that it provides. For example, older pupils spoke in detail about how much they enjoy their outdoor learning.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils across school live up to these expectations. They are proud when they are mentioned in the 'honours' book for showing positive behaviour and attitudes.

Pupils, and children in the early years, quickly settle into school life. They appreciate the emotional support that the school provides. Pupils learn the importance of looking after their physical and mental well-being. For instance, they described 'chime sessions', where they are encouraged to reflect and think positively.

Pupils, including those in the two-year-olds' provision, benefit from an impressive array of wide-ranging experiences which enhance their personal development. A rich variety of visits and after-school activities develop pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their reading adventures at a local lake. Pupils benefit from trips locally and further afield that widen their horizons.

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

Since the last inspection, the trust and school have worked together to rapidly address many of the weaknesses that were identified. This has included stabilising the leadership and staffing in school, as well as swiftly focusing on improving the quality of education.

Pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from an ambitious curriculum that is meaningful and interesting to them. Starting from the beginning of the early years, the school has carefully considered what pupils should learn. As pupils progress through the school, subject curriculums are effectively designed to build on pupils' previous knowledge. Pupils explained to inspectors that recent changes to the curriculum mean that they are learning more.

Staff benefit from a well-thought-out programme of training and support. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Staff help pupils to connect new information to knowledge that they have encountered before. However, there are gaps in some pupils' learning. On occasion, this is where pupils have joined midway through the school and for others it is due to the previous weaker curriculum. Sometimes, staff do not adequately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that some pupils cannot apply what they have learned previously to new learning.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Through high-quality training, the school has ensured that staff have developed expertise in the teaching of reading. Pupils who find reading more difficult receive the support that they need in a timely manner. They read books that match the sounds that they already know. This helps them to become fluent, confident readers who understand what they have read. Pupils access books from class libraries that support their learning in other subjects.

Early reading and mathematics sit at the heart of the early years curriculum and key stage 1. In these subjects, pupils are ready for success as they begin the key stage 2 curriculum. However, the same level of readiness is not reflected in terms of early writing. Some pupils develop bad habits in relation to their pencil grip and letter formation which are not addressed. This hinders the quality of some pupils' written communication.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff work with outside professionals as well as parents and carers to build the right educational support for pupils at the school. Staff successfully begin this work in the early years.

Across the school, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. The school's vision to provide a learning environment where everyone is included promotes respect and supports pupils to work both independently and collaboratively. Pupils play a highly active role in school life. They enjoy taking on different responsibilities in school. Younger pupils look up to these role models and aspire to take on these responsibilities when they reach key stage 2.

The school has implemented an exceptionally well-considered programme to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about gardening and looking after the local area. They revel in their many responsibilities, for example, as play leaders, school buddies and school councillors. Pupils contribute highly to the life of the school and the local community. For example, the school council initiated the school play leader roles to improve break times. The school prepares pupils well for life beyond primary school.

Staff are well supported by leaders; they are very proud to work at the school. They know that leaders, including governors and trustees, consider their workload and well-being before introducing changes. For example, improvements to the curriculum have greatly reduced staff workload while also benefiting the quality of education that pupils receive.

Those responsible for governance understand and fulfil their statutory duties diligently. They provide effective support and challenge to the school to continually improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- 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 so that pupils have secure foundations on which to build new learning.
- Some pupils do not master accurate letter formation by the time they leave Year 2. This hinders their writing fluency as they move through the key stage 2 curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils have the skills that they need to be successful writers by the end of key stage 1.

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	148336
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10294422
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Ballard
Executive Headteacher	Mark Hazzard
Website	www.kirkland.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school's leadership structure has changed. An executive headteacher and a head of school have been appointed.
- Kirkland Church of England Academy converted to become an academy school in February 2021. When its predecessor school, Lamplugh Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. When its predecessor school, Lamplugh Church of England Primary School, last had its section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, it took place in March 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due before July 2025.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school provides early education for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use any 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 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 of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the CEO, executive headteacher, head of school and other members of the senior leadership team. She met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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 lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors as well as members of the trust, including the chair of the trust. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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