

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Ashfield Infant & Nursery School

Newlands Lane, Workington, Cumbria CA14 3JG

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 June 2024

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this welcoming and friendly school. They greet visitors warmly. Pupils live out the school's values of respect, friendship, care and kindness. The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour across school, including during lessons and at social times. Pupils hold doors open for others. They are well mannered and are supportive and encouraging to their friends.

The school wants pupils to succeed. However, some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have gaps in their knowledge. This means that their achievement across the curriculum is uneven overall.

Pupils spoke positively about their learning. They enjoy many trips, such as to the farm, aquariums and local towns. Pupils said that these visits help to make their learning fun.

Pupils represent their school at local events, including at the Remembrance parade. Pupils also visit local care homes to share Easter homemade gifts with residents. They showcase their talents in local art and music competitions. Pupils hold positions of responsibility in school. They take these roles seriously. The school council is proud of the money that it raised to fund additional equipment for playtimes.

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

In recent years, the school has reviewed its curriculum, with many subject curriculums undergoing significant changes. In these subjects, the school has determined the small steps of knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should happen, starting from the beginning of the early years. However, in some other subjects the school has not identified the knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that some teachers are unclear about the specific content that they should deliver to pupils and when this should

be taught. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge which hinders their progress through these curriculums.

Most staff present subject matter clearly. They use resources effectively. Learning within the early years supports the early acquisition of language. This helps to widen children's vocabulary. Staff appreciate the high-quality resources that they have to deliver the curriculum. They said that the school gives them the time that they need to fulfil their roles well.

Staff check pupils' learning well. They identify misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and address these swiftly. The school has implemented the phonics programme effectively. Children in the Nursery class enjoy listening and joining in with rhymes, songs and stories. In the Reception Year, children build on this secure foundation by learning letters and the sounds that they represent. By the time that pupils reach the end of Year 2, many are confident and fluent readers.

Pupils with SEND access the same broad curriculum as their peers. The school accurately identifies pupils' additional needs. It ensures that pupils with SEND receive the support and wider opportunities that they need to achieve. Typically, pupils with SEND are ready for the next stage of their education.

The school works well with parents and carers. It has begun to bring about improvements in the attendance of most pupils. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss important learning. This leads to gaps in their knowledge over time.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. They know about the importance of voting and how it has to be fair. Older pupils know of significant people from history who stood up for their right to vote.

Pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop and express themselves. For example, they benefit from a wealth of clubs, such as those for singing, football, drawing and cookery. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. They understand about bullying. Pupils set themselves goals for the future, and aspire to have jobs such as being a vet or paramedic.

There has been recent, considerable, change to the governing body. Members of the governing body have not been proactive in their succession planning. This has led to many vacancies and large gaps in governors' knowledge and skills. This limits their ability to hold the school to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not identified the knowledge that pupils should learn in some subject curriculums. This means that, sometimes, teachers are unclear about what pupils should know and when subject content should be taught. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. In these subjects, the school should make sure that teachers know what pupils should learn so that they can build a secure body of knowledge over time.
- Some pupils are absent from school too often. This means that they miss out on key learning. This creates gaps in their knowledge. The school should review its systems for identifying and addressing the barriers to pupils' regular attendance so that the rates of persistent absenteeism reduce.
- There are gaps in the knowledge and skills of the governing body. This prevents the governing body from holding the school to account. The governing body should build its expertise so that it can support the school more effectively in its strategies for improvement.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2018.

## 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>	112146
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10337652
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Simon Marshalsea
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amy Barclay
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ashfieldinf.cumbria.sch.uk">www.ashfieldinf.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. She met representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, she held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at lunchtime. She considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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