

Inspection of a good school: Ellenborough Academy

Victory Crescent, Maryport, Cumbria CA15 7NE

Inspection date:

18 June 2024

Outcome

Ellenborough Academy continues to be a good school.

The head of school is Michelle Dover. This school is part of The Good Shepherd 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, Mark Hazzard, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, arrive at school happy and ready to learn. Staff greet them with a warm smile each morning. Pupils know that adults are there to look after them and help with any problems they may have. Pupils said that this helps them to feel safe and happy in school.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Most pupils achieve well from their starting points. From the early years, children learn to follow the school's rules. Pupils behave well in lessons and there is a calm atmosphere in school. During social times, pupils play sensibly together with friends from other classes. Pupils, including children in the provision for two-year-olds, settle into school quickly.

The school has organised a range of trips to places of interest and visits from speakers to help pupils to better understand the wider world. For example, pupils talked with enthusiasm about the residential trip where they learned to canoe. They are proud to be given roles such as playground pals or to be elected to the school council. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously. These opportunities enhance pupils' broader understanding of the subjects that they study.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), effectively. Teachers have strong

subject knowledge. The school ensures that teachers receive suitable training that enables them to deliver the curriculum well. Typically, teachers choose appropriate activities for pupils that help pupils to learn the knowledge that is identified in the curriculum. Staff carefully check that pupils have understood what they have been taught. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, or misconceptions that they may form, are identified and addressed quickly and effectively.

The school has recognised the importance of developing pupils' vocabulary and communication skills. A range of appropriate strategies are used by staff to promote pupils' language development. However, the curriculum does not identify in sufficient detail what pupils need to learn to support their early language development. This means that, at times, staff are unclear how to develop pupils' communication skills further.

The school has prioritised the teaching of early reading. Staff are well trained and deliver the phonics programme effectively. When children join the Reception Year, they learn the sounds that they need to read straight away. Prior to this, children in the Nursery, including two-year-olds, learn rhymes, stories and songs to help them explore words and sounds. Pupils practise their reading with books that are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. The school ensures that any pupils who struggle with reading get the extra support that they need to succeed. Most pupils become fluent readers.

The school has effective systems in place to identify pupils' additional needs. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND learn successfully. The school works with other agencies to support disadvantaged pupils and their families effectively.

Pupils behave well. They understand the school rules and are excited when they earn points for hard work. Pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements. For example, they receive school certificates when they demonstrate the school's rules. Pupils said that their friends are important to them and that they support each other in their lessons and at playtimes.

The school has designed a rich set of experiences to support the wider development of pupils. For example, pupils enjoyed raising money through bag packing at the local supermarket. They also recalled the excitement of tasting a range of new foods. The school has organised interesting events to challenge stereotypes and raise ambition for all pupils.

Governors have worked closely with the trust to develop their knowledge about their roles. They provide suitable challenge and support to the school. Governors are committed to improving the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff value the additional help and training that they receive from the trust. Staff appreciate the consideration that the school pays to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not identify in sufficient detail how pupils' communication and language knowledge will develop over time. This means that some pupils do not develop their language and vocabulary as effectively as they could. This further hinders some pupils' learning in other subjects. The school should ensure that the curriculum makes clear the knowledge that pupils will learn to improve their communication and language development.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ellenborough and Ewanrigg Infant School, to be good in October 2014.

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	148870
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10275150
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Ballard
CEO of trust	Claire Render
Headteacher	Mark Hazzard (Executive Headteacher) Michelle Dover (Head of School)
Website	www.ellenborough.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2019 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head of school, senior leaders and other members of staff throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with governors, the CEO of the trust and the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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.

- Inspectors observed pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and in lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. The inspectors met with parents to gather their views and opinions about the school.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Victoria Burnside

His Majesty's Inspector

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