

Inspection of an outstanding school: Silloth Primary School

Liddel Street, Silloth, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 4DR

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 July 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 enjoy being part of the community of Silloth Primary School. They appreciate how well teachers understand their individual interests. Pupils, and their parents and carers, value the care that they receive from kind and knowledgeable staff. These strong relationships ensure that pupils are well supported throughout their time at the school.

Pupils behave well. Their conduct embodies the school's values that everyone is equal, respected and valued. This starts in the early years, where children communicate effectively with each other and learn how to take turns. Older pupils demonstrate these values by regularly participating in charity events for their community.

Pupils understand the high expectations that the school has of their achievement. They are keen to learn and participate fully in lessons. The school has fostered a supportive learning environment. It supports pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well.

Pupils benefit from a wide variety of trips and visits that enrich their learning. For example, they learn about teamwork and resilience during their outdoor adventure residential. Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of tolerance. They experience a broad range of opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions. Pupils also expand their experiences of culture when they visit larger cities.

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

The school has redesigned the curriculum in many of the subjects that it offers. This has ensured that, overall, pupils are provided with an ambitious and broad learning experience. In most subjects, the school has thought carefully about the important information that pupils should learn and the order in which this content should be

delivered. However, in a few subjects, developments to the curriculum are in their infancy. Teachers are unclear about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn, and, sometimes, the learning in these subjects is not as ambitious as it should be. On occasion, this hinders how well some pupils build the knowledge and skills required for future learning.

The school has developed effective systems to identify any pupils who may have SEND. This includes a systematic approach to gathering information during transition to the school. There are well-structured processes to ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support as quickly as possible. All pupils, including pupils with SEND, follow the same ambitious curriculum. In the main, teachers successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that all pupils can access learning in the way that best suits their needs.

The school has taken effective action to ensure that staff are equipped to deliver the phonics programme effectively. This is having a positive impact on how well pupils learn to read. The foundations are securely built in the Nursery class, where pupils learn sounds through games and rhymes. From the start of the Reception Year, pupils are supported to learn to read confidently and fluently. A love of reading is built into the whole-school curriculum through the careful choice of class books. Pupils read regularly. They enjoy a diverse range of fiction, as well as non-fiction texts, which widen their experiences.

The school has thought carefully about how it identifies any gaps that pupils may have in their learning. In some subjects, there are gaps in pupils' learning because of weaknesses in the previous curriculum. In most cases, assessment structures help teachers to identify any misconceptions or areas of learning where pupils are less confident. However, sometimes, teachers do not support pupils to apply their knowledge in more complex situations. This means that, from time to time, some pupils do not connect or deepen their knowledge as well as they could.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance. It works closely with families to ensure that pupils come to school regularly and that they are on time. This has resulted in considerable improvements in how often some pupils attend school.

The school has carefully thought about the wider skills and experiences that pupils would benefit from. There are many leadership opportunities for pupils, such as being play leaders, reading with younger pupils and through the school councils. Pupils take time each week to reflect on important local, national or global issues. This helps to broaden their understanding of the world.

Governors know the school well. They have a clear and accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. The school has taken the necessary action to make changes to the curriculum to prepare pupils successfully for secondary school.

Staff feel well supported by the approaches that the school has taken to consider their workload and well-being while implementing changes to the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, developments to the curriculum are at an early stage. This means that, from time to time, staff are unclear about the knowledge that pupils most need in readiness for subsequent learning. The school should ensure that it finalises its curriculum thinking so that it is clear what pupils should learn and when this content should be taught.
- Occasionally, teachers do not support pupils to apply their knowledge as well as they could. This means that some pupils do not develop a rich body of knowledge that builds on their prior learning. The school should ensure that staff receive effective support and guidance to ensure that they are supporting pupils to connect, develop and deepen their knowledge.

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 June 2017.

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 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	112235
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10291414
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tom Hailwood and Jennifer Rowland (joint chairs)
Headteacher	Catherine Bellas
Website	www.silloth.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- There is currently no chair of governors at this school. There are two vice-chairs of governors who are taking on the role of chair in this interim period.

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 since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. She met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to 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 scrutinised a range of documentation, including attendance and behaviour records, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development documents.
- The inspector met with some parents at the start of the school day. She also considered the views of parents through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector spoke to staff to discuss the school's support for their well-being and workload. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about behaviour, bullying and personal development. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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