

Inspection of Penny Bridge CofE School

Greenodd, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 7RQ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 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 headteacher of this school is Graham Carrick. This school is part of The Good Shepherd 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.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Penny Bridge CofE School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Penny Bridge CofE Primary School sits at the heart of its local and wider community. Pupils are happy and proud to attend this school.

The school expects pupils to achieve well, and they do. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), leave the school well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils behave well. During lessons, they listen to their teachers and follow instructions carefully. This includes children in the Reception class who follow well-established routines. Across school, pupils are polite and courteous.

Pupils are active and relish being outdoors. They are keen to complete their daily mile around the school grounds before lessons begin. Pupils benefit from an array of clubs such as biking, rugby, outdoor club and cricket. They enjoy taking part in sporting competitions and are proud to represent the school. Pupils are also inspired to develop a love of the arts. For example, they can join the school choir and learn to play piano, brass, woodwind or stringed instruments.

The school helps pupils to impact positively on the local area. For example, school council members help to keep the village tidy and organise litter picks. Older pupils readily bake cakes and serve tea at the local community cafe.

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

The school places a high priority on the teaching of early reading. This begins as soon as children start in the Reception class. Children are encouraged to join in with stories that they know. They enjoy talking about how these relate to their own experiences. Across the early years and key stage 1, well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. Pupils quickly learn the sounds that they need in order to read the books that they take home. Any pupils who struggle to learn their sounds are well supported to quickly catch up with their peers.

Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They know that reading is important and helps them to learn in other subjects too. Older pupils spoke with confidence about the books and authors that they enjoy.

The school has an ambitious curriculum. The important knowledge that pupils should learn has been clearly identified in most subjects. Staff benefit from regular training. They appreciate opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from other schools, including those in the trust. This gives them the secure subject knowledge that they need to design activities which help pupils to remember their learning and to achieve well. The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff adapt activities to enable pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their friends.

The school has well-developed approaches to assessment in most subjects. Teachers check how well pupils are learning in lessons. This means that errors and misconceptions are addressed as they arise. However, in some subjects, the school does not use assessment information to gain a secure understanding of pupils' learning over time. This hampers its ability to refine these subject curriculums so that pupils can achieve the best possible outcomes.

In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is new. The school has not considered the gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge as a result of weaknesses in previous curriculums. This means that, on occasion, some pupils are introduced to new concepts which do not build upon secure prior knowledge. As a result, pupils sometimes find it harder to learn new information or achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

The school places a very high priority on pupils' personal development. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from the extensive opportunities on offer in the local area and further afield. For example, pupils develop their mapping skills outdoors and put these to good use by taking part in orienteering. They relish learning to sail, kayak and paddleboard. Pupils especially enjoy the opportunities that residential visits offer them. For instance, older pupils recently visited London, comparing its significant landmarks to that of their local community.

Pupils develop their skills through a range of leadership roles. These include acting as school council members, sports leaders and prefects. This enables pupils to contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong and do not tolerate injustice. They treat one another with respect and said that everyone is welcome at their school. Pupils' positive conduct helps to make the school a productive learning environment.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. For the very small number of pupils who need support, the school takes effective action to improve their attendance. As a result, most pupils attend well.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They utilise their broad skill set and training to provide appropriate support and challenge. Governors are especially mindful of the importance of staff workload. They check in on staff and offer regular practical support with additional tasks.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not gain a deep enough overview of what pupils know and understand over time. This limits its ability to revise and update the curriculum to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that the information from teachers' checks on pupils' learning are used more productively to identify what is going well and where curriculum improvements are needed.
- In a small number of subjects, some pupils have gaps in important knowledge due to weaknesses in previous curriculums. These gaps have not been identified. This means that, on occasion, pupils are introduced to new learning without their prior knowledge being secure. This hinders them from learning all that they could. The school should ensure that gaps in learning are identified so that pupils build new knowledge and skills securely.

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	140306
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10294375
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Ballard
CEO of the trust	Claire Render
Headteacher	Graham Carrick
Website	www.pennybridge.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in May 2017. The next inspection is scheduled to take place in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.
- Penny Bridge CofE School converted to become an academy in November 2013. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- In May 2022, the school joined The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- An inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with members of the local governing body and of the trust. This included the chairs of both groups.
- An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority and of the archdiocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. They looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Dickinson

Ofsted Inspector

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