

Inspection of Bridekirk Dovenby CofE Primary School

Dovenby, Cumbria, Bridekirk Dovenby School, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 0PG

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive here. They are proud ambassadors for their school. They exhibit the compassion and exceptional manners that are modelled by staff. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), consistently rise to and realise the high aspirations that the school has for their achievement and conduct. They extend a warm welcome to new arrivals at the school. Pupils are happy here.

In early years, children make an exceptionally strong start to their time at the school. The interactions that they have with staff and fellow 'buddies' contribute strongly to their early development. Throughout the school, pupils are highly motivated by their learning.

The impressive range of activities on offer helps pupils to become confident, resilient and courageous young people. For example, as 'News Hounds', pupils produce the school newsletter and as sports leaders they run lunchtime activities. Pupils relish opportunities to take an active role in the life of the school and local community. They organise whole school events, volunteer, raise money for charity and give speeches to educate their peers. For example, about how to care for the earth and sustainability.

Trips to places of worship, the theatre and residential city visits enhance pupils' understanding of the world considerably.

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

The school has designed an inspiring curriculum that is both broad and very ambitious. It has thought carefully about how pupils' knowledge develops over time. Staff appreciate the clear guidance that they receive about what they should teach and when. This supports their workload. Children in Reception are prepared thoroughly for Year 1. For example, staff ensure that children have the spoken language skills so that they can talk with confidence and accuracy about their learning. Most pupils achieve extremely well.

Typically, staff are prompt to address any misconceptions that pupils may have about their learning. This prepares most pupils well to learn new concepts. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to address gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge. When this happens, some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready.

Most of the time, staff use their strong subject knowledge to design activities that help pupils to build their knowledge securely over time. However, on occasion, these activities do not help some pupils to learn the school's ambitious curriculum in sufficient depth.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Staff make effective use of this information to ensure that these pupils learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school pinpoints and addresses the reading needs of pupils with precision. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme with expertise. The school provides effective support to any pupils who need help to close gaps in their phonics knowledge. Pupils

become confident and fluent readers. They recall with enthusiasm the themes from the books that they read. These themes include identity, different types of families and healthy relationships.

Pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to the calm and purposeful environment that exists at the school. Children in early years learn to share, take turns and involve each other with kindness in the activities that staff make available to them. They express joy in each other's achievements. Attendance is a high priority at the school. As a result, pupils attend very well.

The school's provision for pupils' wider development prepares pupils extremely well for life in modern Britain. It prioritises their social and emotional development. Consequently, pupils demonstrate mature levels of empathy and they instinctively care for those less fortunate than themselves. They are incredibly knowledgeable about how to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Pupils delight in taking up the meaningful opportunities that the school provides to demonstrate that they are respectful and active citizens.

Governors hold the school to account with a very high degree of effectiveness. They have a comprehensive and accurate view of the performance of the school. Governors, and leaders at all levels, set extremely high aspirations for all aspects of the school's work. The school is highly effective in its engagement with parents and carers. Parents and carers appreciate the exceptionally strong sense of community and all that the school does to help their children to flourish.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, staff design activities that do not help pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge in the subjects that they study. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they could. The school should ensure that it supports staff to design learning activities that consistently prepare pupils well for each stage of their education.
- On occasion, staff do not rectify gaps and misconceptions in some pupils' knowledge promptly. This means that some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that staff address pupils' misunderstandings in a timely manner so that pupils build their knowledge securely over time.

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	112270
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10290014
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rose Rowlands
Headteacher	Julia Fish
Website	www.bridekirkdovenby.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 October 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in December 2024. Its next inspection is due within six years.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, reading, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent survey called Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered responses to the staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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