Inspection of Newtown Primary School

Newtown Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7LW

Inspection dates:	17 and 18 June 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Mhairi Roberts. This school is part of Cumbria Education Trust. This means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lorrayne Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by George Beveridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn in an extremely calm and purposeful environment. They enjoy their lessons and focus exceptionally well. Pupils learn to identify and manage their emotions independently. Pupils actively contribute to maintaining the school's positive culture. They support new pupils to build positive friendships and encourage them to 'see it, hear it, challenge it, report it' if they have any concerns. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

The school and the trust ensure that the curriculum reflects their high expectations for pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils learn a rich curriculum and develop a broad body of knowledge.

The school is unwavering in its determination to prepare pupils for life beyond school. Pupils broaden their experiences through visits to fells, lakes, cities, theatres, museums and galleries. Through the school's 'be the best you can be' themed work, pupils learn a range of new skills. This includes orienteering, archery, golf, trampolining, judo and more. Pupils develop their talents to a high level. They participate in a range of external sports competitions and perform in front of large audiences, including at a local university. All pupils have the experience of representing the school externally. Attendance at the school's wide-ranging after-school clubs is exceptionally high.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened its quality of education. It has made changes to the curriculum to make clear what pupils should learn and in what order. This includes setting out how pupils in mixed-age classes will deepen their understanding over time. The school and the trust considered staff's workload when introducing these changes.

The school develops staff's expertise. Staff follow the school's agreed lesson structure for all subjects. This includes clear explanation and modelling that focuses on the key knowledge that they intend pupils to learn. However, at times, the activities that pupils complete are not as sharply focused as they could be on enabling them to secure this important knowledge. This impacts the learning of some pupils.

From the early years to Year 6, staff use a range of strategies to check pupils' knowledge. The structure of the curriculum enables pupils to revisit and recall previously taught concepts. These structures and strategies help staff to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and support pupils to remember important learning over time.

The school has high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It works with the trust, external agencies and parents and carers to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified. Staff tailor the delivery of the curriculum to ensure the individual needs of pupils are met.

Nursery-age children learn rhymes and become familiar with identifying sounds in words. This prepares them for starting the phonics programme, which is delivered consistently well by staff. Staff focus sharply on providing the right support to pupils who struggle so that they keep up with their peers. Pupils who join the school in later years with gaps in their phonics knowledge, and those who are learning to speak English, are supported well. They quickly develop confidence in reading.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They have developed highly positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils follow the school's embedded routines impeccably. The school is diligent in its work to ensure that pupils attend well. It identifies barriers to attendance and takes prompt action to remove these. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has significantly reduced over time.

The school's work to enhance pupils' broader development is exceptional. There is a strong focus on pupils making a positive contribution to the school and to society. Pupils design and distribute resources and posters to encourage local residents to keep the area clean and safe. They highly value the relationships they build with residents of a care home. Pupils meet a range of professionals to discuss environmental and social issues. They proudly play an active part in addressing these through their many leadership roles.

The school significantly enriches its personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Pupils complete weekly 'missions' to develop their resilience, problem-solving skills and creativity. They take part in 'innovate competitions', in which they design and present ideas to the trust. Recent designs include utilising food waste to create fertiliser to grow food produce. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the ways in which people can be different and of respecting these differences. They maturely link this to their work to promote equality and fundamental British values.

The trust and the local advisory board understand and meet their responsibilities well. For example, they have provided effective challenge to the school to hold it to account for its work to improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, learning activities are not as sharply focused as they could be on helping pupils to secure the important knowledge that the curriculum outlines pupils should learn. This hinders some pupils from developing the depth of understanding they need. The school should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum consistently enables pupils to develop a secure body of knowledge across all subjects.

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	148137
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10397813
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	George Beveridge
CEO of the trust	Lorrayne Hughes
Headteacher	Mhairi Roberts
Website	www.newtown.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 May 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school is part of Cumbria Education Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a before-school club.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, members of the local advisory board and trust leaders, including the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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. The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 during lessons and at unstructured times.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to pupils and to staff to gather their views. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.

Inspection team

Liz Dayton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cleo Cunningham	Ofsted Inspector

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