

Inspection of Kirkoswald CofE School

Kirkoswald, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1EN

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Kirkoswald CofE Primary School which is the heart of the community. Each morning, staff warmly welcome pupils and their families. The youngest children settle quickly, supported by their parents and carers, as they complete their first activity of the day.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. They are encouraged to 'explore, dream and discover - be the best you can be'. Pupils rise to this and achieve well. They leave the school well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils are happy, polite and respectful. They move around the school calmly. Older pupils enjoy additional responsibilities such as helping younger pupils on sports day. Pupils are proud to be elected as school councillors. They help to make their school a better place. For example, they choose plants from the local garden centre to help brighten up the school grounds.

Pupils benefit from many wider opportunities. They join clubs such as football, art and cricket. This enables pupils to develop further their talents and interests or try something new. Pupils flourish as young citizens. For example, they join in with the 'village coffee' and write to their pen pals in The Gambia. This helps pupils to develop their knowledge of the wider world.

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

In the past year, the new leadership team has worked at pace to implement new subject curriculums. This work also includes early reading which is a high priority for the school. Children in Nursery enjoy listening to the stories that staff read and share. The school's phonics programme begins in the Reception Year. Children learn the sounds and letters that they need to know to read and write successfully. This continues into Year 1 and Year 2, when most pupils become confident and fluent readers. Well-trained staff support pupils who need extra help and ensure that these pupils catch up quickly.

In most subjects, the school has identified clearly the most important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn. For these subjects, staff have the information about what to teach and when. This helps pupils to learn the essential knowledge in the right order. However, in a small number of subjects, including some areas of learning in the early years, this is not the case. Some subject curriculums do not set out the sequence of learning clearly enough. Where this happens, pupils do not learn the knowledge and skills required to build more complex knowledge.

Staff regularly check that pupils remember what they learn. However, in a few subjects, some pupils do not recall their learning from the previous curriculum. This makes it difficult for these pupils to build on their prior learning.

The new leadership team have ensured that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified swiftly. Staff adapt some activities to ensure that pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. However, this is not consistent and means that, at times, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils behave well. They listen to their teachers and want to try their best. At playtimes, pupils make good use of the range of equipment on offer to them. For example, they build dens and play dodgeball.

The school has enriched the curriculum through a range of trips and visits. For instance, pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 work with a local landowner to find out about biodiversity. They learn how to survey the land, plant trees and built a natural dam. This builds on pupils' learning in science and geography. Various experiences such as a trip to Edinburgh, help pupils to build their independence. The annual 'transition camp' enables Year 6 pupils to forge friendships with pupils who will be attending the same high schools.

The school encourages all pupils to participate in range of external events and build their confidence. This includes opportunities to sing at a music festival, perform in the end-of-year play and compete in sporting tournaments. The personal, social and health education curriculum gives pupils a strong understanding of fundamental British values.

The school ensures that pupils' attendance is high. For the small number of pupils who do not attend as often as they should, the school is working closely with families to bring about an improvement.

Governors use their skills and expertise well to provide support and challenge to the school. Together with school leaders, they are committed to looking after the workload of staff. The school provides staff sufficient time to complete additional tasks. Staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

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, and in some areas of learning in the early years, the curriculum is not precisely defined or sufficiently well sequenced. As a result, some pupils do not learn the knowledge and skills needed for future learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum in these areas is sufficiently thought out and sequenced to enable pupils to learn and remember more.

- In a few subjects, the school has not identified gaps in some pupils' learning from the previous curriculums. This means that, on occasion, new learning does not build securely on what pupils know and can do. The school should ensure that gaps in prior knowledge are identified and addressed so that pupils can better tackle new learning.
- At times, the school has not ensured that activities are adapted sufficiently for pupils with SEND. This hinders how well some pupils with SEND achieve. The school should ensure that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and achieve well.

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	112253
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10377951
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	April Farish
Headteacher	Leigh Andrews
Website	www.kirkoswald.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle and had its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, in January 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due in the school year 2027/2028.
- 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. 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 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 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.
- Inspectors also discussed with pupils their learning in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- An inspector met with representatives of the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. They reviewed the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted’s online surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Anna Carroll

Ofsted Inspector

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