

# Inspection of Nenthead Primary School

Nenthead, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3LS

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this small school, which is at the heart of the local community. They value the positive relationships that they have with other pupils and with staff. Pupils told the inspector that everybody is treated equally at their school, which they described as 'like a family'.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, pupils meet these expectations. They achieve well across a range of subjects. Pupils appreciate receiving the school's TED awards for demonstrating 'technique, effort, desire' in their work.

Pupils behave well. During lessons, they concentrate on their learning. This helps classrooms to be calm and purposeful. Pupils get along well together across the school. They support and encourage each other, for instance by complimenting the pupil who is selected as the 'special person' for that week.

The school provides pupils with a rich range of experiences that enhance their learning. For example, pupils go on a variety of trips and visits to the local area and further afield, including to farms, museums, residentials and dance performances. They enjoy many activities, such as canoeing, ghyll scrambling and after-school clubs in gardening, art and construction.

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

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes many references to the local area. It has identified the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. In organising its curriculum, the school has carefully considered the mixed-age classes and the small number of pupils in each cohort.

Staff typically deliver subject curriculums well. They provide clear explanations and use subject-specific vocabulary during lessons. Staff choose suitable learning activities that enable pupils to understand new curriculum content. In many subjects, staff use assessment information to check how well pupils are learning, and where future learning should focus. However, in a small number of subjects, staff do not determine well enough how secure pupils' prior learning is. As a result, pupils have some gaps in their knowledge, which hinders them from learning as well as they should.

Pupils with SEND are supported well in their learning. Staff identify these pupils' additional needs quickly. Staff work with parents and carers, and with external professionals, to enable pupils with SEND to learn well alongside their peers.

Staff foster pupils' love of reading well. For example, pupils have access to a well-stocked school library and visit a local bookshop and library. A range of authors visit the school to talk about their work. Pupils enjoy reading from a range of texts.

The phonics programme is well established, and staff implement it consistently. Pupils practise their reading using books that contain the sounds that they already know. Staff provide individualised and effective support to a small number of pupils who struggle with reading. This means that most pupils become fluent readers.

The school has been successful in improving attendance and reducing some pupils' persistent absence. Pupils understand the importance of showing respect towards others. They particularly appreciate times of togetherness, for example at lunchtime, which is a delightful social event. In addition, pupils, staff, parents and local residents share a community breakfast morning each term. This gives pupils and their families a strong sense of belonging and it brings the local community together.

Pupils' personal development is a priority of the school. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and how to keep safe, including online and when near open water. They learn about responsibility through being part of the school council. Pupils understand what it means to be an active citizen. For example, they raise money for charities by selling cakes. Pupils also visit local care homes and take part in community art projects.

The governing body challenges and supports the school well in continuing to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff are positive about the teamwork approach and the school's consideration for their workload and well-being. For example, they said that they feel listened to and that they welcome the time given to them to fulfil their roles.

## **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, the assessment strategies that staff use do not check how well pupils have embedded prior learning. This means that pupils' learning in these subjects is not as secure as it should be, which results in some gaps in pupils' knowledge over time. The school should strengthen its assessment strategies in these subjects, so that pupils know and remember more.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112116
<b>Local authority</b>	Westmorland and Furness
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294278
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	18
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jim McCarry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Dawson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alstonmoorfederation.org.uk">www.alstonmoorfederation.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is one of three schools that form the Alston Moor Federation. Leadership and governance are shared across the three schools.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school makes use of one unregistered provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school provides education for children from four years of age. At the time of this inspection, there were no children on roll in the early years.

## 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 and 3 read to a familiar adult. He discussed reading with a group of older pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school and the federation. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school, including at playtime and during lunchtime. They spoke with several groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and documents pertaining to pupils' behaviour and levels of attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and their well-being. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector met with some parents at the start of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Ofsted Inspector

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