

Inspection of a good school: Armathwaite School

Armathwaite, Station Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA4 9PW

Inspection date: 30 September 2022

Outcome

Armathwaite School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy coming to Armathwaite School. Leaders' belief that 'it takes a whole community to raise a child' is exemplified through the positive relationships that pupils have with staff and the wider school community. Pupils feel that staff listen to their ideas and any worries that they may have. Pupils trust adults to deal with their concerns quickly and effectively, including rare incidents of bullying. This helps them to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations. As a result, most pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy taking a lead in their own learning for an afternoon every week. They plan, organise and evaluate individual projects during this time, such as fundraising and raising awareness of local and global events. Pupils understand and value the importance of being independent and resilient learners. This helps them to be engaged in their learning.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities to be role models. Older pupils thrive in their role as buddies to children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1. Pupils support and participate in community initiatives such as a local biodiversity project. This helps pupils to become responsible and considerate citizens.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum from the early years to Year 6. They have organised the essential knowledge that pupils should learn in a logical way. This means that pupils, including children in the early years, know and remember more of the curriculum. As a result, they achieve well across a range of subjects.

Subject leaders teach their specialist subject from the early years to Year 6. They have a strong knowledge of their subjects. Leaders carefully consider what to teach and when to teach it. They have a secure understanding of what prior learning is important for pupils to know before they can learn new content in the curriculum.

Leaders use effective assessment strategies to check what pupils know and can remember. They use this information to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This helps pupils, including those with SEND, to build their knowledge effectively over time. Leaders identify the needs of children and pupils with SEND quickly. These pupils are supported well to access the same curriculum as their classmates.

In most subjects, staff have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the intended curriculum successfully. However, in a minority of subjects, leaders have not provided sufficient training for some staff so that they can deliver the curriculum as well as they should. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects.

Leaders have prioritised reading from the early years to Year 6. Pupils read widely and often in and out of school. They especially enjoy visiting the new library areas in the school. Leaders have successfully introduced a new phonics curriculum, which is taught from the beginning of the Reception Year. Teachers have been well trained so that they have adapted seamlessly to the new phonics approach. They ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds that they are learning in class. Pupils who need help to catch up with the phonics curriculum are supported effectively. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They respect each other and the adults in the school. They show consideration for others through their thoughtful actions and behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that they feel that they are part of one big family when they are in school. Staff establish effective routines in the early years, which children follow well. Pupils enjoy their learning. They can concentrate in their lessons as any disruption to their learning is rare.

Leaders think carefully and deliberately about the opportunities to extend pupils' development beyond the academic curriculum. All pupils, including children in the early years, are encouraged to have a voice and to share their ideas openly. For example, pupils appreciate the chance to contribute to decisions about clubs and trips. They enjoy whole-school visits to the Lake District and the opportunity to walk up fells and visit caves. They benefit from a wide range of clubs, such as healthy living, craft and games clubs. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. They understand difference and the importance of treating people equally.

Leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Governors know the school well and support and challenge leaders effectively. Staff feel well supported by leaders because their well-being is prioritised and their workload is considered carefully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff have the training that they need to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any signs that pupils may be suffering from harm. Leaders have ensured that staff know how to report and record

any concerns that they may have. Leaders take swift action to secure help for vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders provide access to additional support in school. They also work with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. For example, pupils learn how to be safe when they are near roads.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders have not ensured that some staff have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum as effectively as they should. This stops some pupils from building up their knowledge as well as leaders intend. Leaders should ensure that staff receive further training to deliver the curriculum well in these subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 112102 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10226079 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 73 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Grant Smith |
| Headteacher | Helen Hepworth |
| Website | www.armathwaite.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 9 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders in school. They also spoke with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors examined a range of safeguarding documentation. They checked how leaders ensure that safer recruitment procedures are in place. Inspectors checked

records of staff's safeguarding training. They also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, in lessons and around school. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils. They also looked at examples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to trusted adults.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Mawson

His Majesty's Inspector

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