

Inspection of a good school: Crosscanonby St John's C of E School

Garborough Close, Crosby, Maryport, Cumbria CA15 6RX

Inspection date:

15 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to this small, friendly village school. They feel safe and happy. They know that the adults who work here care for them and notice when they have concerns. Pupils told inspectors that this is a school with a great family feeling.

Pupils care about each other. Each day they live out the school's Christian values by being kind and helpful towards each other. Teachers expect pupils to behave well. Pupils know that staff reward and celebrate good behaviour. They learn how to manage their behaviour if they find this difficult. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. Pupils trust that if they reported a concern about bullying, staff would deal with it quickly.

Leaders are aspirational for their pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy their learning. However, in some subjects they do not learn as well as they should. This is because the curriculums in these subjects are not as fully developed as they should be.

Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), confidently take part in many extra-curricular opportunities and visits to develop their interests and talents. Older pupils learn leadership skills. They are looking forward to using these skills when organising lunchtime activities for younger pupils. Pupils value the beautiful spaces that they have in the school grounds and the local area. They particularly enjoy visiting the local beach to make 'beach art' with new friends from their partner school.

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

The school has experienced a period of considerable instability in leadership and staffing in the last school year. Leaders are not as far along with their curriculum thinking as they need to be.

The curriculum covers a broad range of subjects from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have identified the important knowledge to be taught and when it should be taught in subjects such as reading and mathematics. Pupils learn well in these subjects, including pupils with SEND. In some other subjects, the curriculums are at an earlier stage of development. Leaders have not identified the most important knowledge for pupils to learn. Pupils do not learn as well in these subjects.

Some subject leaders are new to their roles and have had limited training. This prevents them from being able to provide the support and guidance that colleagues need in order to deliver the curriculum effectively for all pupils.

Where curriculums are further along in their development, teachers use assessment information well to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on to new learning. However, in other subjects, teachers' checks are less effective. This prevents teachers from designing new learning which builds effectively on what pupils already know. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

Leaders have introduced a new early reading programme. They have ensured that all adults are trained well to teach this new approach to phonics. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 systematically build their knowledge of letters and sounds. Teachers make frequent checks to ensure that pupils remember the necessary phonics knowledge. Pupils who find reading difficult receive additional support to help them keep up. Occasionally, the books that teachers ask some pupils to read do not match the sounds that they know closely enough. This hinders these pupils from building fluency and confidence in reading as quickly as they should.

Leaders have made reading a top priority. Teachers guide pupils in their choices and encourage them to read widely. Older pupils talk passionately about the texts that they have read and how, for example, these help them to understand more about issues such as immigration and refugees.

In the main, pupils focus sensibly on their learning activities in classrooms and behave well. Children in the early years learn quickly what is expected of them.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity. These pupils and children in the early years receive effective support to give them access to the curriculum. Leaders make timely links with outside agencies when pupils require further support.

Leaders plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils to enrich their personal development. Pupils enjoy assemblies, where they learn about British values such as individual liberty and tolerance. They embrace diversity and difference. They benefit from a range of cultural experiences that broaden their horizons and prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Governors challenge and support school leaders appropriately. They have steered the school calmly through a period of uncertainty. They know the strengths of the school and what still needs to be done.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They appreciate the support of leaders, who are considerate of their workload and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that science and modern foreign languages may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders keep staff up to date with their safeguarding training. Staff know what action to take if they become concerned about the safety or well-being of a pupil or adult. Leaders carefully record and review information about safeguarding concerns. They liaise well with other agencies to support pupils and their families where necessary.

Leaders also ensure that the school's curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe in the community. For example, in computing, pupils learn how to stay safe when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums in some subjects do not identify the specific knowledge that pupils need to learn. This prevents teachers from building new learning around what pupils already know. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums in these subjects are further developed to include the important knowledge that all pupils need from the early years to Year 6.
- In some subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' knowledge are not effective in giving teachers the information they need to identify gaps and develop future learning. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that prior learning is carefully checked in all subjects.
- Those subject leaders who are new to their roles have had limited training. This prevents them from providing the support and guidance that colleagues need to teach the curriculums well in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders are sufficiently well trained to support the development of curriculums and their implementation in the classroom.
- Occasionally, pupils at the early stage of reading are given reading books that are not matched carefully enough to the sounds that they already know. This hampers their ability to read confidently and fluently. Leaders should ensure that teachers select books for pupils that are matched carefully to the sounds that they know so that they become fluent and confident readers.

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 June 2012.

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

Unique reference number	112273
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10204415
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	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda McDonald
Executive Headteacher	Amanda Pitcher
Website	www.crosscanonby.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An executive headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- A new chair of governors and vice-chair of governors have been appointed since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher and senior teacher.
- The lead inspector spoke to the executive headteacher in her capacity as special educational needs coordinator and the designated lead for safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body and to representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Carlisle.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding documents, looked at employment checks, and spoke with staff about their safeguarding knowledge and responsibilities.
- Inspectors spoke to a small group of parents at the start of the day. Inspectors scrutinised the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also looked at the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Garry White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alyson Middlemass

Ofsted Inspector

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