

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Derwent Vale Primary and Nursery School

William Street, Great Clifton, Workington, Cumbria CA14 1WA

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Inspection date: 29 April 2025

## **Outcome**

Derwent Vale Primary and Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

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

Derwent Vale is a thriving and happy school. It has a very strong sense of community. Pupils want to achieve their best and demonstrate a genuine love for learning.

Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and caring. Pupils work hard and take part in lessons enthusiastically. They are very proud of their work and cooperate well when working together to complete tasks. Pupils move around the school calmly and play safely at breaktimes. They are very polite and welcoming.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It sets high expectations for pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils make highly positive contributions to the life of the school and the local community. For example, they meet weekly with governors to discuss their learning and share their reflections about what could make it better. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to represent the school and the educational visits linked to the subjects they study.

Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong. They have a secure understanding of prejudice and diversity. Pupils are clear in their view that everyone should be respected for who they are.

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

Starting in the early years, teaching fundamental skills in English and mathematics is a

priority. Staff model the vocabulary that children need to know effectively. This helps children talk with increasing confidence about their learning. Children also have frequent opportunities to develop the skills they need to manipulate writing tools and to form letters accurately. This means they have a secure foundation to build on when they move into key stage 1.

The proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check has improved over time. The school takes every opportunity to promote pupils' love of reading. Staff expertly help younger pupils to choose books which interest them and help them practise their reading skills. Staff quickly identify and support pupils who need help to catch up with their reading. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading was slightly below the national average in 2024. These results do not reflect the improvements in reading across the school over time.

The school reviews carefully how well pupils progress through the curriculum. Staff are adept at checking that pupils understand the important concepts in the subjects taught. They skilfully use this information to make adaptations and help pupils secure the important knowledge and skills.

Overall, the curriculum is coherent and interesting. Across most subjects, pupils use subject-specific vocabulary effectively to talk about their ideas and connect their current work to what they have learned previously. They talk enthusiastically about the experiences that enhance their learning in different subjects. For example, in history, pupils can recall the events of the Great Fire of London and explain in detail the lessons learned from that event. However, at times, the way the school expects pupils to record their thoughts and learning is not as consistent. Where this happens, pupils do not share and explain their learning as clearly as they could.

There are clear processes for identifying the needs of pupils with SEND. Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour. When pupils need extra support to manage their emotions, this is provided by skilled staff. Disruption to learning is extremely rare.

The school's systems for monitoring pupils' attendance are effective. The school works effectively with parents and carers to address any barriers to good attendance. This has resulted in improvements for individual pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a priority. The school makes sure that pupils understand concepts such as respect and difference. Pupils learn how to stay safe when online. They also learn about healthy relationships and know there are different types of loving families. Pupils learn how to stay physically and mentally healthy. For example, they enjoy the opportunity to cycle to school. There is a very carefully organised programme of activities to enhance pupils' interests and talents. This is particularly strong in relation to sports and opportunities to explore areas outside their own locality.

Governors know the school very well. They hold leaders to account to ensure the school continually improves. Staff appreciate the support they receive in managing their well-being. They feel very proud to work 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)**

- Sometimes, the school's arrangements and expectations for the way in which pupils record their thoughts about their learning are not strong enough. This means that pupils do not articulate their understanding of what they are learning easily and confidently. The school should ensure that its expectations for how pupils record their ideas are consistent across the curriculum so pupils explain their learning clearly and securely.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in November 2014.

## **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>	112239
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10377949
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stefanie Fleming
<b>Headteacher</b>	Daniel Lucey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk">www.derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides wraparound care in the form of breakfast and after-school clubs.

## Information about this inspection

- 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.
- Inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff. This included discussions about the school's development priorities and the organisation of the curriculum.
- Inspectors also observed pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour records, attendance records, records of governor meetings and school policies.
- Inspectors discussed the school's approach to behaviour and attendance. They spoke with pupils about behaviour and observed pupils at lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- The responses to Ofsted Parent View were reviewed. This included the free-text responses. Inspectors also held discussions with some parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Keith Wright, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sue Bowman

Ofsted Inspector

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