

Inspection of a good school: Bewcastle School

Roadhead, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 6PF

Inspection date:

23 November 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to come to this school and they are keen to learn. Pupils know that adults care for them well and make sure that they are safe. Pupils enjoy coming together as one large family for lunch or to share a story at the end of every school day.

Pupils know that leaders expect them to work hard and show positive attitudes and behaviour. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in subjects such as reading and mathematics. However, in other areas of the curriculum, pupils do not learn or remember as much as they should.

Pupils behave well and treat one another kindly. They said that teachers are fair and always willing to listen. The pupils who spoke with the inspectors said that they were confident that adults would deal with any incidents of bullying effectively.

Pupils have the chance to take part in a range of exciting and adventurous outdoor activities. For example, pupils in key stage 2 can walk the Cumbrian Way and stay away from home for a few nights. However, pupils have few opportunities to visit places of cultural interest, such as museums or places of worship.

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

Leaders have a curriculum in place that covers the full range of subjects in the national curriculum. Teachers regularly check on whether pupils understand what they are learning. They also effectively assess how much pupils have remembered. However, leaders have not planned clearly enough what pupils will learn or when they will learn it. This stops pupils from achieving as well as they should across the whole curriculum.

There are aspects of the curriculum where leaders are clear about the content and the order in which pupils will learn it, such as in reading and mathematics. Leaders prioritise pupils' learning well in reading, including for pupils with SEND. Children begin learning phonics in the early years and, typically, children know the sounds that they will need to develop their reading in Year 1. Leaders ensure that pupils strengthen their knowledge of phonics across key stage 1. They provide effective support if any pupils fall behind in their learning and need to catch up. By the end of Year 2, most can read fluently and with understanding. Older pupils develop fluency and confidence in their reading as they progress through the school.

In several areas of the curriculum in key stage 2, leaders have not clearly set out what pupils will learn or when they will learn it. Consequently, they do not gain knowledge in sufficient depth to enable them to build on their learning. For example, in music, pupils learn about singing but have few opportunities to develop their knowledge of composing and performing with instruments. Pupils' learning in subjects such as history, geography and science does not consistently follow a logical order. Work in books shows that pupils do not build their knowledge strongly enough from one year to the next.

Leaders have accurate methods to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive effective support to enable them to access the curriculum. For example, leaders train teaching assistants to provide extra sessions to make the learning clearer for pupils.

Pupils behave sensibly and show respect for one another and staff in the school. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour in class help them to learn well, with very few disturbances. Adults quickly and effectively sort out any minor incidents of misbehaviour.

Pupils enjoy taking part in the weekly after-school sports club. Leaders find it difficult to set up other after-school clubs because most pupils travel on the school bus and cannot stay on after school. Outdoor activities support pupils in being active and healthy, as well as developing their social skills. However, pupils do not learn enough about different faiths, cultures and traditions within wider British society.

Governors know the school and its community well, but they are not well enough informed about the curriculum. With support from the local authority, they are developing their skills in holding leaders to account for the quality of education.

Staff said that they feel respected and valued in school. They appreciate the consideration that leaders and governors give to their personal well-being and work-life balance. Staff said that leaders do what they can to manage their workload.

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

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff take safeguarding very seriously. They understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff know precisely what to do and who to contact if they suspect that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders provide pupils with the help that they need promptly. Leaders make sure that staff have regular and up-to-date training.

Pupils learn how to be safe, including when online. They know that social media can be dangerous and what to do if they come across any inappropriate material.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not have a coherently sequenced curriculum across several subjects in key stage 2. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge as securely as they should. Leaders must ensure that they clearly plan the knowledge that they want pupils to acquire in a logical order so that pupils know more and remember more across the whole curriculum.
- Leaders do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to find out about other faiths and cultures. Consequently, pupils do not develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their education as fully they should. Leaders should ensure that pupils receive more opportunities to experience different faiths and cultures so that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is as complete as possible.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	112103
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10199818
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nichola Shilcock
Headteacher	Carolyn Murray
Website	bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone changes to senior leadership since the last inspection, including the appointment of an acting headteacher and two executive headteachers. The current executive headteacher took up the post in September 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the executive headteacher and four members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record of checks on staff suitability to work with pupils. Inspectors met with the

designated safeguarding leader and checked how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in some other subjects and spoke to leaders about it.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including free-text comments. They also considered responses to the surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Capron

Ofsted Inspector

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