

Inspection of a good school: St Bridget's CofE School

Brigham, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 0TU

Inspection date:

22 November 2023

Outcome

St Bridget's CofE School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils make a strong contribution to the calm environment of the school. They are polite and happy. Pupils have respectful relationships with staff who care for them well.

Pupils, including children in the early years, respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their achievement. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

During sports activities, pupils learn to support their teammates and to respect their opponents. They take pride in celebrating the achievements of their peers. Pupils develop their confidence and learn to care for others through the many leadership roles available to them. These include library monitors, playground leaders and helping to care for children in the Nursery class.

Pupils enjoy a range of trips that develop their understanding of the subjects that they study. During residential visits, pupils take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. This helps them to become resilient and independent young people.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, the school has determined precisely the important concepts that pupils should learn and when this should happen. Clear links between different subjects help pupils to develop their understanding across the curriculum. As a result, most pupils are well prepared for each stage of their education. Children in the early years benefit from a vibrant and well-organised environment. They make a strong start to their time at school.

In a small number of subjects, the school has not set out the detailed knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that some pupils do not develop the depth of understanding that they should in these subjects.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. They make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. Mostly, staff identify any gaps that pupils have in their learning and provide support to help to address this. However, at times, staff do not address the misunderstandings that some pupils have in their learning quickly enough. When this happens, some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use this information well to design activities that enable these pupils to learn alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND receive the support that they need to take a full and active part in the life of the school.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Children in the Nursery class benefit from many stories, rhymes and songs. This supports their communication and language development. Pupils begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Staff deliver the phonics programme effectively so that most pupils learn to read accurately. Staff make regular checks on pupils' phonics knowledge. They ensure that less-confident readers receive the support that they need to catch up quickly. The school has ensured that the books that pupils read from are well matched to the sounds that they already know. This helps most pupils to become confident and fluent readers in readiness for key stage 2.

Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy the variety of texts that they read. These books cover different themes, such as the importance of friendships, positive family relationships and the many differences that exist between people.

Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning. Children in the early years settle quickly and learn school routines from the start. Where needed, the school supports a small number of pupils to improve their behaviour.

Pupils benefit from experiences that make a strong contribution to their personal development. They know how to stay safe online and how to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils respect different faiths and cultures. They develop their understanding of human rights by studying influential people from history.

The governing body provides effective support and challenge to the school. It ensures that leaders at all levels prioritise pupils' achievement, welfare and wider development. Staff welcome the support that they receive. They access regular training that helps them to carry out their roles effectively. Staff are 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)

- In some subjects, the school is still refining its thinking about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, some pupils do not develop a deep body of knowledge across the curriculum. The school should identify all the information that pupils should learn and the order that this curriculum content should be taught.
- On occasions, pupils' misconceptions are not rectified in a timely manner. When this happens, these pupils are not as well prepared as they should be to learn new content. The school should ensure that staff address misconceptions quickly enough so that pupils achieve as well as they should.

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 April 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

Unique reference number	112271
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10291416
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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathryn Chambers
Headteacher	Lisa Hemingway
Website	www.brigham.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in June 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by July 2025.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has nursery provision for children aged between three and four years old.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time inspection judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and leaders of SEND, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- An inspector observed some pupils from the Reception Year to Year 2 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke to the school's adviser at the diocese and a local authority general adviser.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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