

Inspection of a good school: Levens CofE School

Church Road Levens, Levens, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 8PU

Inspection date:

31 January 2023

Outcome

Levens CofE School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy coming to this warm and welcoming school. They get on well with their classmates and teachers. Parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for the achievement of all pupils. Pupils respond well. They work hard in class and take pride in the work they produce. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well during their time at the school.

Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes. They develop strong, positive relationships with adults in and around the school. They feel safe in the school and trust staff to listen to any worries they might have. Staff are quick and effective in dealing with any rare incidents of name-calling or bullying.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities that staff provide for them beyond the school day, such as art and cross-country running. They enjoy going on regular educational trips and residential visits. The small size of the school has not prevented pupils from having a number of recent sporting successes. They spoke about how much they enjoy the school's links with their local semi-professional rugby league club.

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

Leaders have given phonics and reading a high priority. From the start of their time in the Nursery, children begin developing their awareness of different sounds. Children in the Reception class and pupils in key stage 1 build on this good start in their daily phonics sessions. They develop their knowledge of letters and sounds in carefully ordered steps. Staff give pupils who are falling behind the help that they need to catch up with their peers. Leaders realised that the school had too few books that helped pupils to practise their phonic skills and so invested in new reading material, which arrived just before the

inspection. Older pupils continue to enjoy reading and talked happily about their favourite authors and types of books. As they move up the school, most pupils become accurate and fluent readers.

Leaders have developed a broad and engaging curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. A recent increase in the number of classes in the school has caused leaders to review and refine their curriculum thinking to make sure that they have identified what pupils need to learn and the order in which they need to learn it. This has been done successfully in many subject areas. In these areas, teachers are clear about what children and pupils need to learn, from early years to the end of key stage 2.

There are, however, a small number of subjects in which subject leaders have only been in their role for a short period of time. This has meant that, in these subjects, refinements to the curriculum have not been finalised and recently purchased resources have not had time to become embedded in day-to-day teaching.

Leaders are quick to spot the additional needs of pupils with SEND, including in the early years. Staff make sensible adaptations to work set for these pupils and provide them with effective help in class. This gives pupils with SEND access to the same broad curriculum as their peers.

Pupils behave well throughout the day. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes make a positive contribution to learning across the school. Lessons proceed with little disruption. In the early years, children work and play well together, both inside and in the attractive and well-resourced outdoor area.

Leaders have recognised the importance of raising pupils' awareness of diversity in society. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. For example, they were keen to talk about the things that they had learned in their recent 'multi-faith week' and about their links with a school in Uganda. They were proud, too, of their achievements in raising funds for charity. There is a real sense of pupils being encouraged to become thoughtful members of their local community and of the wider world.

Governors know the school well and are ambitious for its future. Leaders and governors think about staff's needs when they make decisions about the school. Staff are very positive about working at the school and feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and act promptly to report any worries that they have. Leaders are quick to respond if such concerns are reported. Record-keeping, including recruitment checks, is thorough. Staff make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in

different situations, including when they are near water and when they are working or playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There have been changes to the class structure in the school, and some subject leaders have only recently taken up their roles. As a result, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not finished reviewing and refining their curriculum thinking in light of these changes. Provision in these areas, therefore, is not as well established as it is in other subjects and so pupils' learning is less well developed. Leaders should ensure that these subject leaders are given time to finalise their curriculum thinking so that provision across all subjects is equally effective in enabling pupils to build on their prior learning.

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 May 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](#)' 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 | 112262 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10256180 |
| 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 | 90 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Suzan Bishop |
| Headteacher | Jane Farraday |
| Website | www.levens.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2016.
- The vast majority of teaching staff have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 headteacher and other leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke to members of the governing body and to representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. 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. They also looked at examples of pupils' work in other subjects.

- Inspectors made checks on leaders' records of safeguarding and staff recruitment and spoke to staff about the procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school.
- One inspector spoke informally to a number of parents at the school gate at the start of the day. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including a number of free-text comments, and to the online staff survey. No responses to the online survey for pupils were received.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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