

Inspection of St Herbert’s CofE (VA) Primary and Nursery School

Trinity Way, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4HZ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and happy to attend this welcoming school. Their relationships with each other and with staff are strong. Pupils are caring and considerate towards others. For example, through their roles as 'seeds and gardeners', older pupils support children in the early years to feel happy and to settle in well when they start school.

Pupils' conduct embodies the school rules to be ready, respectful and safe. Pupils behave well in lessons and move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. Any pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour benefit from the help and support that they receive from adults.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of trips, clubs and experiences that the school offers. For example, pupils spoke excitedly about the fell walks that they have completed. They also enjoy visiting galleries and museums.

The school is ambitious for all pupils' achievement including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy their lessons. They rise to the school's high expectations for their learning. Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils, including those with SEND. Staff deliver the curriculum clearly and consistently. This enables pupils to achieve well. The curriculum sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn. In most subjects, the key knowledge has been broken down into well-ordered steps that pupils will learn from the early years to the end of Year 6. However, in a few subjects, these smaller steps are less clearly defined. This means that checks on learning are not as effective as they could be in identifying the gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, some pupils' learning in these subjects is not as secure as it could be.

The additional needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Staff provide timely and effective support to these pupils. Staff make appropriate adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that pupils can access the same curriculum content as their peers. Pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum.

The school prioritises the development of children's language and communication skills in the early years. For example, staff introduce new vocabulary and give children meaningful opportunities to practise using these words. Pupils of all ages are exposed to a broad range of rich vocabulary through the books that they read.

The school's consistent approach to the teaching of phonics means that children progress well through the early reading programme. This starts as soon as children begin in the Reception class. The school provides effective support for less-confident

readers. The school ensures that the books that pupils read are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Pupils, including those with SEND, learn to read confidently and fluently.

The school has correctly identified that pupils' writing skills at the end of key stage 2 are not as secure as those in reading and mathematics. The school has implemented a new approach to the teaching of writing to support pupils' development in this area. This includes a greater focus on teaching the technical skills of writing. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and to embed their writing skills. For some pupils, this hinders the quality of their writing.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They told inspectors that they enjoy working collaboratively with their peers. Children in the early years learn to focus for sustained periods and they quickly develop independence. Staff quickly address any disruption to pupils' learning if it occurs.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of experiences to support their personal development. Pupils spoke positively about opportunities that they have to learn to play musical instruments, to try new sports, or to be part of the choir. They are proud to represent the school at sporting events and at poetry reading competitions. Pupils, including children in the early years, readily take on positions of responsibility, such as acting as school councillors. Pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values and how these relate to their own lives. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school carefully considers the well-being of staff and their workload when making decisions about school improvement, such as changes to the curriculum. Governors understand the school's priorities well. They provide effective challenge and support to improve the school further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not finalised the smaller components of knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that some pupils are not building their knowledge as securely in these subjects. The school should ensure that the precise knowledge that pupils should learn is clear, so that gaps in learning are identified and addressed.

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	134789
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10294349
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andy Murphie
Headteacher	Michael Craig
Website	www.stherberts.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2024.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, the chair of governors, other governors and a range of staff at the school. Inspectors also met with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, and art and design. For each deep dive, 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club and observed pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about pupils' wider personal development.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers on the playground and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views about school life.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.

Inspection team

Liz Dayton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Cliff	Ofsted Inspector
Lindy Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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