

Inspection of a good school: Bowness-on-Solway Primary School

Bowness-on-Solway, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 5AF

Inspection date:

23 June 2021

Outcome

Bowness-on-Solway Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and learning alongside their friends. Pupils like the fact that they attend a small school. They believe that this helps them to know everyone really well. Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They enjoy regular swimming and road safety lessons that help them to stay safe in the local area.

Pupils rise to the challenge of leaders' high expectations of their achievements. Pupils value leaders' efforts to celebrate their successes. This is evident in the way that leaders have adorned the school walls and corridors with vibrant displays of pupils' writing, art and craftwork.

Pupils are aware of the rewards and consequences for behaviour. They stated that bullying and name-calling are very rare. Pupils know their teachers well. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and deal quickly with any incidents of bullying.

Pupils enjoy the many additional opportunities that leaders and staff provide. All pupils learn to play a brass instrument. They enjoy participating in the many clubs on offer, including football and gymnastics. Others delight in the opportunity to show responsibility by becoming a member of the school council.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have logically ordered the knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn in each subject. Across the curriculum, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to build on what they have learned already. For example, in art and design, pupils learn to draw using a variety of media. Teachers ensure that pupils

produce tones and marks before they move on to explore the effect of light on objects. This thoughtful approach to curriculum planning means that pupils can extend their knowledge over time. By the time that pupils reach the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for secondary school.

Subject leaders work alongside teachers to check on and develop further how well curriculums are being delivered. This subject-specific support is helping to enhance teachers' delivery of subject curriculums. This is particularly the case in science, physical education and mathematics. This is because subject leaders have benefited from additional training that has enhanced their own subject expertise. That said, in some other subjects, leaders have been unable to access similar training. This means that these leaders are not as well equipped to support teachers in delivering the planned curriculum as effectively as possible.

Leaders have made the teaching of early reading and phonics central to the school's curriculum. Staff deliver new phonics knowledge in an ordered way. This enables pupils, including children in the early years, to learn new sounds in a logical order. Teachers carefully match the books that pupils take home so that pupils can practise the sounds that they learn in class. This supports pupils in reading accurately and fluently. The leader for English works alongside staff to ensure that the teaching of phonics follows the school's plans. Teachers and support staff provide extra help for pupils, including older pupils in key stage 2, to catch up if they fall behind with their reading.

Teachers enhance the curriculum through a range of additional activities. For example, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, engage in fundraising for local charities. As well as this, pupils have raised money to provide lifeboat volunteers with necessary equipment. Pupils also collect food parcels for the local food bank. Teachers regularly plan opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures.

Staff instil high expectations of pupils' behaviour from the start of the early years. Children and pupils engage in their learning with little fuss. They are seldomly distracted in lessons. This helps pupils to learn well.

Governors hold leaders to account for the breadth and quality of the curriculum. For example, members of the governing body understand how well staff support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. Staff are positive about school leaders. They feel valued. For instance, staff expressed their appreciation for the consideration that leaders give to the staff's well-being and work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make careful checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. Staff receive regular training to keep their safeguarding skills up to date. This helps them to spot potential signs of neglect or abuse. Leaders work with several external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families. Leaders have ensured that pupils learn how

to keep themselves safe. As well as learning about local risks, pupils learn how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders have not had opportunities to advance their own subject-specific pedagogical knowledge. This means that in some subjects, leaders are not able to support teachers with the delivery of some subject curriculums. Leaders should explore ways to offer subject-specific training to subject leaders. They should ensure that subject leaders provide improved levels of support to teachers. This is to enable them to help all pupils to know and remember even more of what they have learned.

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. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2015.

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 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 [here](#).

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	112414
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10183998
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire McCaul
Headteacher	Susan Davies
Website	http://www.bowness-on-solway.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 May 2015 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors viewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and checked how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Inspectors did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. As part of this work, inspectors visited lessons and met with subject leaders and teachers.

- Inspectors viewed examples of pupils' work and spoke with them about their learning. Inspectors observed children and pupils reading to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 16 free-text comments.

Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jan Corlett

Ofsted Inspector

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