

# Inspection of a good school: Derwent Vale Primary and Nursery School

William Street, Great Clifton, Workington, Cumbria CA14 1WA

---

Inspection dates:

13 December 2019

## Outcome

Derwent Vale Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Derwent Vale. They get a warm welcome each morning from caring, cheerful staff. Classrooms are fun, interesting places of learning. Teachers and pupils get along well together. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Pupils' good attendance shows how much they enjoy school.

Pupils behave well. Playtimes and lunchtimes are cheerful, sociable occasions. Bullying is rare. Pupils know staff will sort out any small disagreements. Adults help pupils who need extra support with their work, emotions or behaviour, in a sensitive manner. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.

Leaders prioritise reading. Books are everywhere. Every spare moment is filled with adults and pupils reading. Pupils leave Year 6 well prepared for the demands of the secondary curriculum. Changes to phonics and reading are taking place in the early years and key stage 1. However, new systems are not yet fully embedded.

Senior leaders have high aspirations for pupils. Pupils access the full primary curriculum. Exciting experiences promote pupils' interests in the great outdoors, sport, art, music and the world of work. Recent staffing changes have affected subject leadership roles. Some subjects, such as mathematics, are planned and sequenced well. Others need more work.

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

Leaders want pupils to do well. They understand the importance of reading, writing and mathematics for pupils' success in later life. Reading, writing and mathematics take place every day. Classrooms have good-quality displays and resources. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They mainly plan learning tasks carefully for pupils. Pupils, including those with SEND, who need extra practice are supported well. Key stage 2 pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are above national averages year on year.

Leaders ensure that children in early years start learning about numbers straight away. Teachers use technical mathematical vocabulary. They encourage pupils to do so too. New programmes of work and well-planned tasks in mathematics are making a difference. Children are using numbers with more confidence and understanding right from the start.

Staff get pupils interested in words and language from the moment they enter school. Children start learning about phonics and reading right away. Adults read stories aloud and with enthusiasm. A love of books develops well among children. They learn familiar nursery rhymes and stories by heart. Anyone falling behind gets the extra help and practice they need to catch up. Most pupils reach the expected standard in phonics in Year 1. Pupils' outcomes match national averages over time.

Not all pupils, however, read fluently by the end of key stage 1. Some try to read books that are not closely matched to their phonics knowledge. This makes reading difficult for them. Leaders recognise this. They have introduced a new phonics programme. Teachers are amending the way they teach phonics. Staff training has taken place, and more is due. Teachers' familiarity with the programme is developing well. Children in the early years and key stage 1 are starting to benefit from teachers' increasing expertise.

Leaders think hard about the curriculum for pupils. Work with local business partners gets pupils thinking about future career possibilities. Year 6 pupils working on technology challenges acquire a healthy competitive edge and good eye for design. Pupils reflect on their lives, and the lives of others, beyond the school gates. Taking part in activities within their local community inspires pupils to make a difference. The school choir regularly delights neighbours, including the elderly. Pupils are thoughtful, have good manners and are respectful. The personal, social, cultural and moral development of pupils is a strength of the school's curriculum.

Pupils enjoy learning in many subjects. They like science. Most teachers build on pupils' existing knowledge in science well. Teachers' own subject knowledge is secure. Most pupils remember important vocabulary and scientific concepts as they move through school. In Year 3 and 4 pupils know a lot about sound. For example, they can explain how sounds are made and changed, and how sound travels to the ear.

The planning and order of learning in a minority of subjects are less well developed. Some leaders are new to the role of leading learning and teaching in their subject. Leaders are enthusiastic. Most have strong subject knowledge themselves. Some subject improvement plans and programmes of work, however, lack detail. They do not spell out carefully enough how pupils' learning or teachers' teaching will be developed. It is not always clear what needs to be taught or when.

Most parents are full of praise for the school and staff. They describe staff as 'wonderful', 'approachable' and 'helpful'. Staff are confident that leaders value them. They say leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' checks on staff and adults working with pupils meet requirements. Records are well maintained and detailed. This minimises risks for pupils and staff.

Staff get up-to-date information and good-quality training. They talk knowledgeably about child protection advice, including matters to do with county lines. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare.

Pupils' attendance is above national averages. They feel safe. Pupils appreciate the way staff look after them. They understand the need for school rules and routines, including fire drills. Almost all parents agree that their children are safe and well looked after here.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils in key stage 1 and some children in early years read books which are not closely matched to the phonics they are learning. This means that they sometimes struggle to read the books they are given. Teachers should ensure that books match pupils' phonics knowledge more precisely, so that pupils' achievements in reading continue to rise.
- Planning and programmes of work in a minority of subjects lack detail. The most important knowledge and content that pupils need to know and remember is not made as clear as it needs to be. This does not help pupils to know and remember more in these subjects. Leaders should equip new subject leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to plan and sequence learning in their areas of the curriculum effectively. Ofsted's transition arrangements were used on this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

## 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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the 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 on 5–6 November 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112239
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10046041
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kerri Black
<b>Headteacher</b>	Frances Edmondson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk">www.derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–6 November 2014

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has taken responsibility for an additional school as an executive headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, governors, including the chair of the governing body, the special educational needs coordinator, a representative from the local authority, staff and pupils.
- I spoke with several parents face to face at the end of the school day and took the views of 43 parents who responded to Ofsted's survey into account. I also considered the views of 41 parents who sent messages to me via free-text.
- The views of 15 members of staff and 39 pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered. We observed pupils' behaviour and interactions at various times during the school day.
- We looked at a range of school documentation and logs, including those for behaviour, SEND, safeguarding and school development. We examined the school's improvement and subject action plans.

- Reading, mathematics and science were looked at closely during this inspection. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, heard pupils reading, looked at pupils' work and spoke with senior leaders, teachers and pupils about each subject.

### **Inspection team**

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Rigby

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020