

Inspection of a good school: Plumpton School

Plumpton, Plumpton School, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 9PA

Inspection date: 12 January 2022

Outcome

Plumpton School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe in this thriving school community. They know that staff care about their well-being and will keep a watchful eye on them. Pupils enjoy playing with their friends at breaktimes and they get on well together.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They listen attentively to their teachers and work hard. Pupils know that staff have high expectations of what they can achieve and that their teachers will help them to do well. Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum that encourages them to be curious and excited about the world around them.

Pupils behave well, both in lessons and during breaktimes. Staff expect pupils to show respect and kindness to others. Pupils value the differences that make them unique. Pupils are confident that staff would quickly sort out any incidents of bullying.

Pupils enjoy the trips that adults plan for them. They recalled with pleasure a recent visit to the theatre and a residential trip to a local outdoor centre. Pupils are excited about an upcoming trip to the zoo. Pupils appreciate the school's extensive grounds and the surrounding countryside.

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

Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn a curriculum that is broad and commensurate with the national curriculum. Pupils, including children in the early years, talked enthusiastically about their learning.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember. Leaders have organised this knowledge carefully to ensure that pupils can successfully build on what they know already. In these subjects, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Pupils achieve well in these subjects.

Conversely, in one or two subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. This means that teachers do not have enough information about the content that pupils should learn. This hinders teachers in designing learning that enables pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. While pupils progress well in these subjects, some do not achieve as highly as they should.

In the main, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check on the knowledge that pupils can remember. They use this information well to adapt new learning and to revisit any important content that pupils may have missed or forgotten. Teachers are reshaping the curriculum effectively to reinforce subject content that may have been missed because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Younger pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from daily phonics sessions. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. They have ensured that staff are well trained to deliver the programme. Children in the early years quickly begin to learn their letter sounds. They read books that match the sounds that they know. Staff keep a careful check on how well pupils are developing their reading knowledge. If pupils fall behind in their reading, staff provide appropriate and timely additional support to help them to catch up quickly. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can read fluently and accurately.

A sense of excitement about books runs through the school. Older and younger pupils alike relish story times with their teachers. They become absorbed in the high-quality texts that leaders have chosen for pupils to study. Pupils develop their comprehension skills well.

In the early years, children use every opportunity, including songs and stories, to learn numbers, including basic number facts. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils, including those with SEND, are regaining their confidence and fluency with mathematics.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are identified accurately. Experienced staff provide effective support to assist these pupils in their learning. Pupils with SEND access the same challenging curriculum as their peers.

Children in the early years and pupils across the rest of the school have positive attitudes to their learning. There is little disruption in lessons.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. They enjoy learning about different cultures and religions. Pupils know that differences between families exist and recognise the importance of tolerance and the benefits of diversity. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders are cognisant of staff's workload. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, governors have supported leaders well to ensure that the needs of pupils and families are met. Governors successfully hold leaders to account for the quality of education that the school provides.

Parents and carers speak highly about the school. Every parent who responded to Ofsted Parent View said that they would recommend Plumpton School to others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular updates and training to ensure that they are kept up to date with safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff are vigilant. They know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.

Leaders keep detailed and appropriate records on how they follow up any safeguarding concerns. Pupils' welfare is central to leaders' decision-making. For example, leaders are not afraid to challenge the decisions of other agencies.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when working online. Pupils understand the importance of developing and maintaining healthy relationships with their peers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of foundation subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that they complete their curriculum planning in these remaining subjects. This is so that teachers are better equipped to design learning that deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

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.

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.

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	112120
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10212422
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Gibson
Headteacher	Sarah Penny
Website	www.plumpton.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of staff. Inspectors spoke with two representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school life. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during playtimes.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including leaders' checks on newly appointed staff.

- Inspectors spoke with parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed aspects of other subjects.

Inspection team

Garry White, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Hardman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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