

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Distington Community School

Church Road, Distington, Church Rd, Workington Cumbria CA14 5TE

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Inspection date:

28 January 2025

## **Outcome**

Distington Community School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Distington is a happy and thriving school where everyone is welcomed. The school has created a caring and inclusive environment where a key priority is that every member of the school family is 'safe, healthy and happy to learn'.

The school has established a special relationship with its local community. It is truly connected to the people and places it serves. Pupils participate enthusiastically in local events, and their work in the community makes a strong contribution to keeping the local area tidy and safe. This helps to build community spirit and encourage good citizenship.

Pupils, and children in early years, rise to the high expectations the school has of their behaviour. Older pupils act as role models and playleaders for younger pupils. When pupils need support with managing their emotions, skilled staff teach them strategies which help them.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of all pupils, and most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. The school ensures that there is high-quality provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide effective support for pupils who need it. This enables pupils with SEND to study the same curriculum as their peers.

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

Children make a strong start in early years, where the curriculum is sequenced with the precise knowledge, skills and key words that they need to develop their communication and language skills. Early years is a nurturing and language-rich environment. There is a

sharp focus on learning key vocabulary, which continues through the school. Staff help children to learn sounds and acquire early reading and writing skills well. Children listen carefully and practise sounding out letters and building words modelled by the adults. They then have the chance to practise writing letters when they are learning independently in the classroom. As pupils move through the school, they typically become fluent, confident readers. Staff provide expert help for pupils who find reading difficult, using books which are well matched to the sounds they are learning.

The school is successful in encouraging pupils to develop a love for reading. Older pupils speak with enthusiasm about their favourite books, characters and authors. The school provides a wide choice of books to spark pupils' interests, including books that reflect the diversity of the world.

The school provides training and support that helps teachers to maintain strong subject knowledge. Lesson activities are carefully designed to meet the needs of all pupils. The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND well. It uses appropriate resources and adaptations to enable pupils with SEND to make good progress through the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Typically, staff use their strong subject knowledge to make checks on what pupils know and remember. They use this information to address misunderstandings that pupils have about their learning. However, in a small number of subjects, staff do not address pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. When this happens, pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. This means that gaps in pupils' learning sometimes persist. This makes it difficult for pupils to build on what they know when new learning is introduced.

Pupils move around the school sensibly. They are polite, friendly and eager to talk with adults, including visitors to the school. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. The school prioritises attendance. Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers, and they ensure that families receive the support that they need to improve their children's attendance.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership responsibilities, such as being play leaders or members of the school council. Pupils learn to respect differences. They learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy by exercising and eating the right foods. They learn strategies to help them manage their feelings, and they know there is always a kind adult to talk to if they have any worries. The school provides exciting experiences, including visits to museums, to the coast and residential trips. Pupils also benefit from a range of inspiring visitors, such as local authors, poets and artists. These experiences give them aspirations.

The school's focus on spoken language supports pupils to become confident to share their thoughts and ideas. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

The governing body is a committed and knowledgeable group that successfully holds school leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. It also supports

the well-being and workload of leaders and staff. Staff appreciate leaders' careful consideration of their well-being.

## **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 checks on what pupils remember over time are not effective enough. When this happens, gaps in learning persist. This makes it difficult for pupils to build new knowledge when they encounter new learning. The school should ensure that staff check pupils' learning and address misconceptions so that pupils learn the curriculum in these subjects with greater success.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133264
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348230
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	113
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nicola Stephenson
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Angela Quirk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.distington-comm.cumbria.sch.uk">www.distington-comm.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body and with the local authority school adviser.

- The inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, reading, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They took account of the responses from staff to Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

### **Inspection team**

Cleo Cunningham, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kathryn Pym

Ofsted Inspector

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