

Inspection of Distington Community School

Church Road, Distington, Workington, Cumbria CA14 5TE

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and well cared for at this school. They know they can always ask staff for help if they have any worries or concerns. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They know that their teachers expect them to try hard and they live up to these expectations. Pupils take pride in their work and enjoy showing the headteacher what they have done.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well in a wide range of subjects. They prioritise helping pupils to become keen readers. Leaders want all pupils to be well prepared for secondary school, when the time comes. They are becoming more successful at making sure this happens.

Pupils are proud of their good attendance at school. They know that this helps them to learn. Pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They enjoy having special responsibilities in school, such as serving on the school council. Pupils know that their views matter to the adults in school.

Pupils behave well. They move around the school sensibly. Pupils are respectful to staff and polite to visitors. They almost always settle down to learning quickly.

Pupils show caring attitudes towards each other. Older pupils like to help younger ones. Pupils are tolerant of differences among people. They know what bullying is. They say that this is rare in their school. Pupils know that if it did occur, their teachers would resolve it quickly.

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

Leaders and governors have improved the school a lot since the last inspection. Pupils now get a good quality of education at Distington.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that sets out what pupils need to learn in each subject in each year group. They have involved teachers fully in developing this curriculum. This enables teachers to plan lessons, or 'topics', so that pupils build up their skills and knowledge in each subject. This curriculum is working well. There is scope for a few minor adjustments to the sequencing of learning in some topics. This is mainly in history, geography and art.

Pupils learn to read well at this school. Leaders make sure that all staff see reading as the top priority. Children in the Reception class have daily phonics lessons from the start. Staff have received training in the teaching of early reading and phonics. Any children who fall behind quickly get help so that they catch up. Teachers make sure that they read to pupils in key stage 2. They choose books carefully, so that pupils hear a wide range of new words. Pupils say that reading helps them to learn in other subjects. For example, pupils learned about the Second World War when they read the story 'Tom's Midnight Garden'.

Pupils achieve well in mathematics. They build up their knowledge securely over time. This helps them to use their skills to solve more difficult problems as they move through school. Pupils told us that if they get stuck, their teachers help them to understand so that they can move on.

Pupils behave well in class. Very occasionally, some younger pupils lose concentration in their phonics or literacy lessons. This happens when support staff spend too long on some parts of the lesson before moving on.

Teachers adapt the curriculum well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders make sure that where pupils need extra support, they receive it. This means that this group of pupils achieve well and meet their individual targets.

Children make strong gains in their learning in the early years. Adults understand how young children learn. They help children to feel safe and secure. Classrooms are well organised. This enables children to become familiar with their new environment and settle quickly into school life.

The early years curriculum is effective. Adults plan exciting experiences that help children develop knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. Consequently, children are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders and staff keep a close eye on the progress that children make. This helps them to make sure that children get extra help if they need it.

Pupils have plenty of experiences that help them develop personally. For example, they raise funds for charity, and take part in sports activities after school. Pupils visit places such as the historic remains of a Roman camp, and cities such as Edinburgh. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures. They provide opportunities for older pupils to meet people with different working roles. This helps pupils to think about their own ambitions for the future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established clear systems in school for staff to report and record any concerns. All staff understand these systems and use them well. The school works well with a range of partners, such as health professionals and children's services. This means that if pupils and their families need support, they receive it in a timely manner.

Leaders know the risks that their pupils face in their local area and in the wider world. They take steps to help pupils and their parents and carers minimise these risks. For example, pupils learn in school how to keep themselves safe online. The school then provides workshops for parents, to help them make sure that media devices at home are safe for their children to use.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Much of the curriculum is delivered through smaller units of work that enable pupils to learn across subjects at the same time. These smaller units have been carefully planned over the year to ensure that pupils build up their knowledge and skills. Within some of these smaller units, learning in history, geography and art is not always as clearly ordered as it is in other subjects. Leaders now need to ensure that any remaining inconsistencies in the sequencing of learning are eliminated, so that pupils build their knowledge and skills in the best possible way.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers and staff have the strong subject knowledge they need to be able to teach early reading and phonics effectively. This means that in almost all lessons, children and pupils concentrate and learn well. On a very small number of occasions, support staff allow too much time to be spent on an easier aspect of an activity before moving on to more challenging elements. When this happens, pupils concentrate less well. Leaders now need to ensure that there is consistency in the quality of learning in all activities, so that pupils maintain their usual good concentration and are engaged.

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

Unique reference number	133264
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10087855
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	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rev Julia Powley
Headteacher	Angela Quirk
Website	www.distington-comm.cumbria.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2017

Information about this school

- Pupils in key stage 1 are taught in one mixed-age class. All other year groups are taught in single-age classes.
- The school has a part-time Nursery class, catering for 3- to 4-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers and support staff, members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- We spoke with some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- We considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We also considered the six responses to the staff survey and the one response to the pupil survey.
- We visited lessons in every year group.

- We looked in detail at mathematics, science, history and reading. For each of these subjects, we visited lessons, and held discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils. We scrutinised pupils' work in all of these subjects.
- We carried out a range of activities to inspect the effectiveness of safeguarding. This included scrutinising documentation, including the school's checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and records of staff training, and discussions with pupils, staff, leaders and governors.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Capron

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