

Inspection of Lowca Community School

Lowca, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 6QS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this small, welcoming school. They embrace the school's values of love, ownership, well-being, collaboration and attitudes to learning. Pupils value the positive relationships that they have with each other and with staff. Older pupils support younger children and are positive role models. They told inspectors that attending this school feels like being 'part of a family'. Pupils behave well. They are kind, caring and polite.

The school has close links with the local community. For example, pupils help to keep the village clean and tidy. They organise events such as singing carols in a nearby care home for older people. Pupils have created booklets for local people and visitors that celebrate where they live. Additionally, pupils make a positive contribution in school. For example, pupils take on roles as team captains, school councillors and mental-health champions with pride and enthusiasm. These wide experiences help pupils to develop a sense of community, responsibility and empathy.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. It has raised the ambition of the curriculum and ensures that pupils benefit from a high quality of education. Pupils know what staff expect of them. They listen to their teachers, work hard and try their best. Most pupils achieve well.

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

The school has designed a broad and rich curriculum, from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 6. The curriculum is ambitious for pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Staff are adept at supporting these pupils well. They adapt curriculum delivery effectively to meet pupils' individual needs.

The school has identified the small steps of knowledge that pupils should acquire over time. Mostly, teachers check what pupils know and can remember and use this information to shape future lessons. The school has prioritised communication and language in the early years. Staff model vocabulary well and children use this confidently across the areas of learning.

In most subjects, staff implement the curriculum well. However, in some subjects, the delivery of the curriculum does not help pupils to learn all the important knowledge that they should. For example, at times, staff do not select suitable activities to help pupils to learn the intended curriculum. This hinders some pupils in developing secure knowledge in these subjects.

The school fosters pupils' love of reading. Pupils read widely and often. Classrooms and the school's library have plentiful inviting and diverse books for pupils to read. The school has established an effective phonics programme, starting from the

beginning of the Reception Year. Pupils learn and remember the sounds and letters that they need to read unfamiliar words. Those who need additional help are supported effectively. Pupils become confident and fluent readers by the time that they leave school.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They take great pride in what they know and can do. Pupils use every opportunity during lessons to discuss their learning and to share their ideas with each other. They are respectful and considerate of one another. Attendance is a high priority. The school is successful in securing positive levels of attendance. It has taken effective action to address some pupils' low prior attendance. This has led to a sustained improvement in these pupils' attendance over time.

The curriculum extends beyond the academic to support pupils' personal development. For example, pupils learn about different countries and the cultures, beliefs and traditions that people have. They meet people from other religions to learn more about world faiths. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of diversity, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils value opportunities to take their learning beyond the classroom. For example, they enjoy drama, construction, outdoor learning, den building, movie, British Sign Language and gardening clubs. They also appreciate trips such as to castles, museums, cities and sports tournaments.

The school has taken swift and effective action to address the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection. It has managed improvements to the curriculum without increasing staff's workload. Staff value the opportunities that they have for professional development to further enhance their subject knowledge and expertise. Governors provide effective support and challenge to continue to improve the quality of education that the school provides. The school has taken considerable steps to engage with the wider community and with parents and carers to support pupils' education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff do not deliver the curriculum as effectively as they should. This includes selecting appropriate learning activities. As a result, some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge that they need to be prepared for new learning. The school should ensure that teachers have the support that they need to deliver the curriculum consistently well so that pupils learn all that they should.

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

Unique reference number	112158
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10290010
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	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Guest
Headteacher	Jennifer Walker
Website	www.lowca.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

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

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school. They also spoke with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with three governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at breaktimes, during lessons and around school. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They looked at examples of pupils’ work. The lead inspector also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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