

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Michael's Nursery and Infant School

Station Road, Workington, Cumbria CA14 2UY

Inspection date:

18 March 2025

Outcome

St Michael's Nursery and Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a joyful place to be. Children in the early years and older pupils are happy and cheerful. Everyone is welcome and valued. Strong relationships between the school and the community help to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils know that staff will listen to them and comfort them if they have any worries or concerns.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. It ensures that pupils benefit from all the school has to offer. As a result, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils are polite, kind and considerate of one another. They enjoy playing together and interact positively with each other. Pupils are respectful and listen carefully to their teachers.

Pupils value the opportunities that they have to explore the local area. For example, they enjoy visits to a library, café, supermarket and harbour. This helps pupils to feel grounded in their local community and to develop a sense of belonging. These activities also help pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe when they are outside of school.

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

The school has taken effective action since the previous inspection to maintain the quality of education that it provides. Its vision to provide an inclusive and nurturing environment for its pupils permeates across the school community. Parents and carers hold the school

in high regard. Staff value the steps that the school has taken to reduce their workload so that they can focus on their teaching.

The school has established a broad and ambitious curriculum from the early years to the end of Year 2. In most subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, the school has ensured that the curriculums are clear about what essential knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. This supports teachers to deepen pupils' learning over time. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not clearly identified the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. At times, this hinders some pupils from learning all that they should.

The curriculum is delivered consistently well. Staff are adept at checking what pupils know and can do. They use this information effectively to help pupils to build on what they already know. The school has a strong focus on developing pupils' communication and language skills to help them to be successful in other areas of the curriculum. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Staff are highly skilled at identifying the additional needs of pupils, including those with SEND. This begins in the two-year-old provision and ensures that appropriate support is provided early. Pupils with SEND are supported extremely well. The school is passionate about ensuring that all pupils' needs are met and that they are fully included in the life of the school. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school avidly promotes pupils' love of reading. It has ensured that pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality books. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and read often. The school's phonics programme is delivered consistently well. Pupils acquire the phonics knowledge they need to read confidently and fluently by the end of Year 2. The school provides effective support to help struggling readers to catch up.

The school's high expectations for behaviour are established in the early years. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a priority for the school and, as such, is woven through all areas of the curriculum. For example, there are deliberately and carefully planned activities to encourage turn-taking, sharing and cooperating with others. Staff are highly skilled at supporting children to learn how to manage their emotions and behaviour from a young age. As a result, by Years 1 and 2, pupils behave in a calm, thoughtful and sensible manner in their lessons, at breaktimes and around the school.

Attendance is a high priority for the school. The school has worked tirelessly to help families to establish positive attendance habits from a very early age. Although some pupils do not attend as often as they should, the school uses a wide range of strategies to secure improvements in their attendance over time.

Pupils benefit considerably from the school's programme to support their personal development. There is a broad range of clubs and enrichment activities on offer. This includes a bespoke residential visit for older pupils.

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 school has not ensured that it has clearly identified the most important knowledge for pupils to learn. This means that some pupils' learning is not sufficiently secure over time. The school should ensure that it provides teachers with subject-specific support so that they can help pupils to learn all that they should.

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 to be 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2015.

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	112143
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10348089
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Reverend Dr Peter Powell
Headteacher	Candice Regan
Website	www.smhwkt.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a new headteacher in post since the time of the last inspection. There have also been other changes to leadership and governance arrangements.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children. This has opened since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision and a sample of lessons in key stage 1 classes. They also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They also considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, including their free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and spoke with members of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in lessons and around school. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Ofsted Inspector

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