

Inspection of a good school: Irthington Village School

Irthington, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 4NJ

Inspection date: 22 November 2022

Outcome

Irthington Village School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Irthington Village School. They said that it is a friendly place and everyone is kind and caring. Pupils and children of all ages enjoy playing with their friends outside in the lovely grounds. They appreciate the outdoor spaces that staff have created for them and make good use of them. Staff have forged positive relationships with pupils and know them well. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to their concerns or worries. They say that leaders deal well with any incidents of bullying. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils understand these expectations and try their best to rise to them. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school is rooted in the local community. Pupils are proud of the work that they do to help people who live in the village. For example, pupils recently distributed harvest hampers. Pupils have also helped to plant wild flowers for Britain in Bloom. They have also worked with a local project to reduce carbon emissions. This work helps pupils to become responsible citizens and to develop a sense of place and connection to their community.

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

Leaders have constructed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Leaders place a strong emphasis on raising pupils' aspirations. Leaders have thought carefully about the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn from the early years to Year 6. They have thought about how the curriculum can meet the needs of pupils, including children in the early years, in a small school. Pupils build knowledge in a logical way. This means that they know more and remember more over time. Leaders quickly identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Pupils with SEND are supported well to access the same curriculum as their classmates.

In some subjects, leaders have not provided sufficient opportunities for subject leaders to develop their subject-specific knowledge and expertise. This means that they do not lead their subjects across the school as well as they could.

Teachers effectively check what pupils know and can remember. They identify any misconceptions that pupils may have and use this to inform future teaching.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the curriculum and provide opportunities for pupils to develop a love of reading. For example, different authors have been to school to deliver workshops and sign books. This inspires pupils to read a wide range of books and write their own stories. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, read widely and often. Leaders have successfully introduced a phonics curriculum that is taught from the beginning of the Reception Year. Pupils read books that contain the words and sounds that they have learned so far. This helps them to read with confidence. Teachers quickly identify any pupils who may be struggling to keep up with the curriculum. These pupils are supported well to catch up quickly.

Pupils behave well in their lessons and around school. They are polite and friendly. Leaders establish clear and consistent routines in the early years and children follow these sensibly. Older pupils are keen to be positive role models for younger children and take this responsibility seriously. Pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate on their work. They listen to their teachers and ask for help when they need it. Disruption to lessons is rare.

Leaders have provided many opportunities for pupils' broader development. Older pupils are proud to run the school tuck shop, for example, and some pupils are nominated to be 'Rota Kids'. These pupils choose different charities to support and organise events to raise money. They take responsibility for collecting donations and giving them to charity. Pupils have developed a strong sense of fairness through their work on understanding how global trading affects third-world countries. For example, pupils have welcomed farmers from Malawi into school. These opportunities help pupils to become independent and respectful citizens in society.

The school is well led and managed. Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and appreciate the support that they receive from each other and leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide training for staff to identify pupils who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any signs that they may be suffering harm. Staff act quickly if they have a concern and follow established reporting systems. Leaders act in a timely and appropriate manner to follow up on any safeguarding concerns. Leaders secure help from external agencies for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the curriculum, including when they are online. Pupils understand what to do if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe in a situation and they know to talk to a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not provided sufficient training for subject leaders. As a result, some leaders do not have the knowledge and expertise to lead their subjects as effectively as they could. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders are given further support to lead their subjects well across the school.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in February 2012.

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](#)' 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	112113
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10226132
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	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Prince
Headteacher	Lynn Harrison
Website	www.irthingtonvillage.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the 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 leaders in school. They also spoke with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils.

- Inspectors examined a range of safeguarding documentation. They checked how leaders ensure that safer recruitment procedures are in place. Inspectors checked records of staff’s safeguarding training. They also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at playtimes, in lessons and around school. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They met subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They also looked at examples of pupils’ work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to trusted adults.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Elaine Mawson

His Majesty’s Inspector

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