

Longtown Primary School

Mary Street, Longtown, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 5UG

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her senior leaders have worked effectively to secure a good quality of education at Longtown Primary School.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are well focused and identify areas for development accurately. However, the intended impact of their actions is not measured against pupils' achievement.
- Leaders provide a curriculum with a wide range of subjects that contribute well to pupils' development.
- Trustees, with the help of the local advisory board, challenge and support leaders well. They have a secure view of standards in the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and support their well-being effectively.
- Teaching and learning in a range of subjects are good. Teachers typically plan lessons that bring learning to life.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, such as when they are using the internet.
- A good range of activities and clubs effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They typically conduct themselves well around the school. Most show positive attitudes to their learning. There have been no exclusions since 2017.
- The progress of most current pupils across a range of subjects is good.
- Attendance has improved substantially since 2017 and is currently above the national average.
- Children in the early years benefit from good teaching and make considerable progress from their starting points.
- Pupils do not have many opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects.
- Sometimes, teaching assistants do not match activities to the abilities of the pupils closely enough.
- Although teachers usually provide work that challenges the most able, this is not consistent in geography and history.
- Some children in the early years do not hold their pencil with a suitable grip. This means that they do not make as much progress in writing as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that the intended impact of leaders' action plans for improvement is measurable against pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently provide work in geography and history that challenges the most able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects
 - making sure that teaching assistants more consistently take into account the abilities of their pupils to engage them in their learning more effectively.
- Further improve the quality of writing in the early years by ensuring that as many children as possible develop a suitable pencil grip at an early stage.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her senior leaders, who have all taken up their posts since September 2017, have taken effective action to secure a good quality of education at Longtown Primary School. They have ensured that the school is a safe place and that pupils' progress is now good across a range of subjects.
- Leaders make well-focused plans to bring about continuing improvement in the school. They analyse pupils' performance accurately and use their findings to identify appropriate actions. However, the way in which they evaluate their intended impact is not measured against pupils' achievement.
- There is currently a focus on improving writing across the school, because leaders correctly identified a dip in attainment in Year 6 in 2018. They have revised the way in which teachers plan the teaching of writing so that there is greater consistency across year groups and a sharper focus on the progress that pupils are making. Current pupils make good progress in this subject.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading for pleasure, both in school and at home. There are timetabled visits to the local library on the school site. This enables all classes to have access to high-quality fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils frequently take books home to read to parents and carers. Younger pupils take home books that are matched to their knowledge of phonics, as well as an additional book that they choose for themselves. These actions successfully foster a culture of reading across the school that contributes effectively to the good progress that the majority of pupils make.
- There has been a new approach to the teaching of mathematics since September 2018. This focuses on ensuring that pupils have a deeper and more secure understanding of essential mathematical concepts. This understanding enables them to develop their skills effectively in solving problems and mathematical reasoning. Teachers have received high-quality training from colleagues across the trust that has improved their teaching skills. Consequently, current pupils make good progress in this subject.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders have effective systems for checking on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They use a variety of methods, including formal observations of lessons, analysis of pupils' books and talking with pupils about their work. Leaders identify any actions that staff may need to take to bring about improvement in their teaching and share these with them, providing training and support as required. They then review these actions at a later point to see how effective they have been. Leaders' work in this area has ensured that the quality of teaching across a wide range of subjects is good and that the majority of pupils make good progress.
- Leaders ensure that the difference in performance between boys and girls is diminishing over time. Leaders use effective strategies to support boys' and girls' learning as appropriate. For example, in supporting boys, they provide reading books

that the boys find appealing, or teach mathematics in a context that reflects their experiences, such as farming.

- The curriculum contains a wide range of subjects that contributes effectively to pupils' all-round education. Leaders have ensured that there are plenty of opportunities for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include after-school clubs, educational visits and other activities to enrich pupils' experience of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn to play a brass instrument, which gives them the opportunity to make music together and develop concentration and cooperation skills.
- Pupils have a good understanding of equalities and fundamental British values because leaders promote them effectively through, for instance, lessons in personal, social and health education and religious education. Leaders' actions contribute strongly to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sports premium effectively. They use specialist coaches to train staff so that they can develop new skills. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in activities such as gymnastics, athletics and football. They increasingly enjoy taking part in competitive sports events with other primary schools.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that individual 'academic adventure plans', which are the school's version of individual education plans, are in place for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders use funding effectively, providing training for staff and additional help for pupils. Most pupils with SEND make good progress as a result.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding. They carefully check the progress of individuals and hold regular reviews of the effectiveness of extra support activities. An analysis of disadvantaged pupils' work and an evaluation of case studies showed that these pupils are making strong progress in their learning.
- Leaders have taken effective action to reduce the number of exclusions of pupils and improve their attendance. A new behaviour-management system, developed in liaison with pupils, has contributed strongly to reducing the number of exclusions to zero since 2017. Celebrations of good attendance, along with early communication with parents of pupils with poor attendance, have reduced absence rates to below the most recent national average. There are currently no instances of persistent absence, which represents a substantial reduction since 2017.
- Staff are positive about their work in the school. They appreciate the training that they receive and feel that it improves their performance. They find leaders approachable and willing to accept suggestions about how to manage their workload.
- Most parents were positive about the work of the school and its staff. They said that they appreciate the changes brought about by the headteacher and the trust. They recognise the positive impact that leaders' actions have had on their children and the community. Parents particularly noted the recent strengthening of procedures to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Although a small number felt that communication could be better, they typically responded to Parent View with comments about how much their children enjoy school and about the good progress that they make.

Governance of the school

- The board of trustees has a secure view of standards in the school. Trustees are ambitious for pupils to achieve as much as possible. The local advisory board holds regular meetings with school leaders. It provides detailed reports to trustees on how effectively leaders are securing good progress for pupils. This enables the trust board to hold leaders to account, which they do effectively. The work of trustees, with the support of the local advisory board, has contributed considerably to the good quality of education that the school provides.
- Trustees keep a close watch on how effective safeguarding is in the school. There is a specific trustee who oversees safeguarding and meets with the designated lead to discuss relevant matters. The board also commissions an independent consultant to carry out audits of safeguarding practice. Trustees are fully familiar with the filtering and monitoring system that is in place for the school's internet access. The system is fit for purpose. The work of the board ensures that safeguarding remains a constant focus in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong. Staff are very well trained in how to recognise the various signs of abuse. They report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead, who is the headteacher. She then logs them on the school's electronic recording system. Leaders provide extra training relevant to specific issues that may feature in the locality, such as presentations from the police about antisocial behaviour and work on domestic violence.
- There are effective systems in place across the school to ensure that pupils are protected from harm. Since her arrival in 2017, the headteacher has made substantial changes to the procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe on the premises, such as keeping entrances and exits secure. As designated lead, she and her safeguarding team keep detailed records of concerns about pupils and take prompt action, making referrals to outside services when required.
- The school's required record of checks on members of staff is compliant with the government's guidance. It is well organised and thorough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the arrival of the headteacher in September 2017, there has been a sharp focus on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. Strategies include: developing pupils' ability to write at length by providing more opportunities to do so; a more focused approach to the teaching of grammar and spelling; a greater emphasis on pupils' mastering fundamental mathematical ideas and supporting pupils' development in reading by providing more opportunities to read high-quality texts. Because of leaders' actions, teaching and learning in a range of subjects are now good.
- Staff make effective use of questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to deepen their learning. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics. They

also usually assess pupils well, intervening in a timely way to help pupils to overcome misconceptions. In this way, staff help pupils to learn from their mistakes, which contributes effectively to the good progress that the majority of pupils make.

- Teachers typically plan lessons that bring learning to life for pupils. For example, in key stage 1, pupils were perturbed to read a letter from the headteacher, in which she announced that there would be no further school trips for them. This acted as a stimulus to encourage them to write good-quality letters in response, which aimed to persuade the headteacher to change her mind.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective and pupils make good progress across the school. Teachers plan lessons carefully, ensuring that pupils understand essential ideas before developing them and moving on to more complex work. The most able pupils complete tasks that challenge them well. Typically, teachers match work well to pupils' abilities.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a systematic approach. Pupils quickly develop their understanding of letters and sounds. The vast majority apply their knowledge well to their reading and writing. Pupils' good grounding in phonics makes a considerable contribution to their progress in these subjects.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are positive. Staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Conduct in class is typically good, with some classes showing excellent attitudes to learning. Staff manage behaviour effectively.
- Teachers give pupils opportunities to use in other subjects the skills that they learn in English. For example, in history, they write factual reports about Mary, Queen of Scots. In science, they write about investigations into light and shadow. However, there are few examples of pupils using their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- In most cases, teachers make sure that teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, both when they teach groups and when they teach individual pupils. Sometimes, however, teaching assistants do not ensure that pupils are getting the most out of their learning. This is because they do not match the activity to pupils' needs well enough, which results in pupils losing concentration and becoming distracted.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that adults will help them if they have any worries. Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations. They find out about how to avoid danger when they are near roads. They are clear about the risks involved in using the internet because staff keep them informed. For example, they know not to reveal personal information.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Leaders also successfully support pupils' physical and mental health. Pupils enjoy taking part in a

range of clubs, including dance and sports, such as football and athletics. Leaders foster pupils' mental health and emotional well-being. For example, they have established 'The Ark', which is a dedicated quiet space in the school for pupils to use if they are experiencing emotional stress of any kind. Leaders also encourage pupils to make healthy choices of food. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet for staying fit and well.

- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and, if it does happen, adults deal with it effectively. Leaders' records show very few incidents of bullying of any kind. Pupils also have a good understanding of fundamental British values, equalities and inclusion. This is because staff provide well-planned activities to develop it. These include lessons in personal, social and health education, for instance. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the importance of respecting others, including those with different races, cultures and sexuality from their own.
- Pupils are happy and confident. They enjoy coming to school and typically have positive attitudes to their learning. However, pupils sometimes show a lack of pride in the presentation of their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils typically conduct themselves well around the premises. This makes a strong contribution to the sense of order that characterises the school. Pupils are usually polite and courteous.
- Behaviour in class is good, with some year groups in key stage 2 showing very good behaviour. However, there are occasions when some pupils do not demonstrate self-discipline, which results in them stopping work and distracting others.
- Attendance has improved strongly in the last two years. The absence rate for current pupils is below the most recent national average. There are currently no pupils who are persistently absent.
- There have been no exclusions since 2016/2017. Leaders' revised approach to managing behaviour has played a substantial part in this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching since the school opened, with the result that most current pupils make good progress across a range of subjects. Differences in academic performance between boys and girls are diminishing over time. Because of the good quality of teaching that is now evident in the school, most pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Published assessment information for 2018 showed that, by the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and mathematics was similar to the national average, although writing was below it, representing a dip when compared to 2017. Leaders have successfully addressed this issue and most current pupils in Year 6 are acquiring the relevant knowledge and skills well.

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics for current pupils is good across key stage 2. In writing, for example, most-able pupils in upper key stage 2 can use sophisticated language and sentence structures, such as passive verbs. They also interest the reader with well-chosen phrases, such as 'Almost unbelievably' to open a sentence explaining that some early presidents of the United States of America owned slaves.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached the expected standard or better in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. Current pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress in these subjects because of effective teaching. In writing, for example, they write in a range of genres and benefit from the stimulus provided by high-quality class texts. In mathematics, they show good development of essential mathematical knowledge and apply it successfully to solving problems.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, most pupils make good progress. They acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills for each subject effectively. For instance, in geography, pupils learn about glaciers and earthquakes. In history, they find out about the Victorians and the Stone Age. In science, pupils learn about a variety of topics, including evolution and forces.
- The majority of pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points. This is because they receive good teaching and a range of extra activities that help them to learn. Teaching assistants are typically skilled in supporting these pupils and teachers deploy them to good effect.
- Current disadvantaged pupils make good and improving progress because of the effective support that leaders provide. This includes work with teaching assistants to overcome academic barriers. By the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils' progress is usually similar to that of other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils typically do work that challenges them and requires them to think more deeply. For example, in science in key stage 2, most-able pupils use their knowledge of light and shadow to explain the reflection of a mountain in a lake, depicted in a photograph. In geography and history, however, most-able pupils have few opportunities to apply their knowledge in ways that challenge them.
- The majority of pupils read with appropriate fluency and comprehension. They read for pleasure and enjoy different types of reading book. Where required, pupils use their knowledge of phonics to work out how to read unfamiliar words.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2018 was considerably above the national average. The majority of current pupils in Year 1 are acquiring a good knowledge of phonics because of effective teaching.

Early years provision

Good

- Since the school opened, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved. In 2018 it was higher than the national average. Given that children enter school with skills and knowledge that are below those that are

typical for their age, this represents good progress. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, most children are ready for the challenges of Year 1.

- The quality of teaching is good. This is because staff plan activities effectively, using their strong subject knowledge. They provide children with a wide range of experiences that cover all areas of learning and ensure that current children are making good progress. Staff develop children's interests well and readily provide support and challenge them. For instance, children in Nursery experience work that stretches them in mathematics as they work out how many to add to eight to make 10. The learning environment, both in the classroom and outdoors, is well resourced and supports children's learning effectively. Consequently, most current children are making good progress.
- All the relevant welfare requirements are met. The provision is well staffed. It is a safe environment for children and all statutory school policies are in place. Children behave well and show that they feel safe through their interactions with adults and each other.
- From the start of children's time in the early years, staff foster a love of books and stories. For example, children enjoy creating a different ending to a story such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. This encourages them to develop their speaking skills before writing simple sentences using their knowledge of phonics. Staff also use engaging story-telling successfully to develop a love of books and to capture children's imagination.
- In Reception, evidence in books showed that children regularly complete activities such as 'My Book Review'. In this, they write the title of a book, the author, their 'star rating' for their enjoyment of the book and their favourite part of it. This demonstrates the focus on developing writing for a real purpose from an early age. Most children make good progress in writing. However, some children's progress is hampered by underdeveloped fine motor skills, resulting in them not using the correct pencil grip.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The early years lead constantly and successfully works to bring about continuous improvement. She has, for example, put a greater emphasis on developing children's love of books to strengthen further their progress in reading. She makes detailed assessments of children's performance. These enable her to plan and provide effectively for the large majority of pupils' needs, including those with SEND or who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders involve parents in their child's education effectively. Children's 'learning journeys' provide a good summary of their progress through, for example, photographs, notes on focused observations and pieces of their work. These are shared with parents. Parents also contribute to these 'learning journeys' by sharing what their children do beyond school. This helps staff to plan how children can develop further.
- Staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics and pupils quickly develop their understanding of letters and their sounds. Children who read to the inspectors demonstrated how well they can blend sounds to work out unfamiliar words. This has a positive impact on the progress that children are making in reading.

School details

Unique reference number	143116
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10087796

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Debbie Francis
Headteacher	Cate Floyd
Telephone number	01228 791203
Website	www.longtownprimary.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	admin@longtownprimary.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Longtown Primary School opened as an academy in September 2016. It is part of the Cumbria Education Trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The school shares the site with a private nursery. This is inspected separately and its report is available on the Ofsted website.

- The school shares the site with the local library.
- Leaders run a breakfast club at the school.
- All current teachers started at the school in September 2017 or after.
- The deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team carried out observations of learning in all classes. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the director of education for the trust. The headteacher was present at inspectors' team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including: the school's self-evaluation summary; action plans for school improvement; assessment information; minutes of meetings of the trust board and the local advisory board; reports of external evaluations; and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- The inspection team had meetings with: the headteacher; senior leaders; subject leaders; other members of staff; the vice-chair of the trust board and members of the local advisory board; and parents and pupils.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils' work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors evaluated 27 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, during the inspection. They also analysed 13 responses to the staff survey and 11 responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Naomi Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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