

Life in all its fullness.



Ambleside Church of England Primary School

Vicarage Road,
Ambleside,
Cumbria LA22 9DH.

Tel 015394 32181
email: admin@ambleside.cumbria.sch.uk
Web: www.ambleside.cumbria.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs Alison Broom

Wednesday 24th April, 2024

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you that the report on the school's most recent Ofsted inspection has been published and is now available to read in full on the school's website. It should be available on the Ofsted website from around Monday 29th April.

The Ofsted inspection took place on Wednesday 28th February and Thursday 29th February with the school notified a day in advance. The inspection which took place was a section 5 inspection which is a full graded inspection. The school was last inspected in 2018 under the old Ofsted framework which was replaced in 2019. Inspections under the current framework are carried out differently to 2018 with a much greater emphasis on a school's curriculum and the knowledge that children have remembered.

Two inspectors visited the school, both of whom were extremely professional and fair; doing everything that they could to put staff at ease during the process. They carried out interviews with groups of pupils, looked at pupils' exercise books, met with subject leaders, undertook 10-minute visits to lessons and looked in depth at the school's safeguarding provision. They also met with the school governors and the Academy Trust.

Throughout the two-day process I found the judgements that the inspectors reached to be fair and accurate and that they matched the judgements that I had shared with them in my 'Self Evaluation Report' (which has to be shared in advance with the lead inspector when they notify you of their visit).

In reaching their judgements, inspectors are not allowed to make predictions of future success and can only make judgements based on the period of time that has gone by since the last inspection and the evidence that they can find on the days that the inspection takes place. In the case of Ambleside CE Primary School, this is the work that has taken place over the past 5 years since the last inspection in 2018.

Areas that the school scored 'good' judgements.

'Pupils enjoy attending this small school with a big heart.' (Ofsted 2024)

There were many positive findings which the inspectors shared with me throughout the two days which you will find detailed in the report. They found the school to be a tremendously supportive and happy place where pupils feel cared for, happy and safe. The behaviour of



our pupils also shone through, particularly during visits to playtimes and during interviews carried out with groups of children. The children talked enthusiastically about their favourite subjects, extra-curricular activities and trips and their strong relationships with the trusted adults who work with them in school.

The school's values, such as friendship and forgiveness, underpin the positive relationships that pupils have with each other. Pupils are happy. They feel cared for and safe. The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). (Ofsted 2024)

Teaching and learning in the Early Years (Nursery and Reception) also came out strongly with a thoroughly planned curriculum and effective assessment strategies being used to support children.

Areas that the school needs to work on

The main area for development that is identified in the new report is the need to develop the school's curriculum and to continuously monitor how effective it is. In January, the school invested in a new curriculum and the teachers have undertaken many hours of training in order to begin delivering this. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the inspection, we cannot be judged on this new curriculum as it has not had enough time to be embedded and so the judgement is made on the school's old curriculum. This may seem unfair to some but it is the only way that schools can be treated equally. Unfortunately, the school's previous curriculum has been judged to be 'requires improvement' which is reflected in the judgement titled 'Quality of Teaching and Learning' in the Ofsted report. As I stated previously, I am entirely in agreement with this judgement and have been working hard with the staff to phase out the old curriculum that the school was using.

Since the last inspection, it is clear to see that the school staff have worked tremendously hard supporting and teaching the children who have come through the school; many going the extra mile to provide exciting and memorable experiences beyond the day-to-day curriculum. The feedback on the school's curriculum over the past few months, from myself, the Academy Trust and now Ofsted, has been difficult for staff to hear and I am sensitive to the need to continue implementing our new school curriculum to get the best outcomes for our children whilst ensuring that our hardworking staff feel supported and valued.

Subject leadership is another area for development for the school as this links directly with the quality and outcomes in the school's curriculum. Recently, governors and subject leaders had begun a thorough timetable of subject leader monitoring in their subject areas. However, this is a new approach being adopted by the school and, whilst Ofsted were very happy to see subject leaders and governors working together to scrutinise subjects in the curriculum, they could not judge this area as 'good' as, again, they need evidence that this has happened over a sustained period of time to judge it as 'good'. The involvement of the Trustees and the governing body was also looked at in detail and both groups spent time in

school being interviewed during the inspection. Whilst I have found both the governing body and the Trust to be tremendously helpful and supportive since taking up my post in September, Ofsted would like to see a continued high level of collaboration with the school in order to move the school's judgement well beyond 'requires improvement' in this area. These areas for development come under the heading 'Leadership and Management' in the Ofsted report.

In summary, the over-arching grade given to the school for the time being is 'requires improvement'. Whilst this two-word label for our school is uncomfortable to read, I remain extremely positive and optimistic about what lies ahead for our school. We have a fantastic group of children and an extremely dedicated team who now have a very clear understanding of how to completely change this temporary judgement. Ofsted will return within two and a half years to carry out another full graded inspection. Should I feel that the school's judgement deserves to be inspected sooner than this, I am able to request a visit from them myself. With our new curriculum well under way, I fully intend to be able to do this.

Should any parent wish to talk to me further about the new report please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss it.

Please follow this link to read the full report on our school website:

<https://www.ambleside.cumbria.sch.uk/information/inspection-reports/>

If you are not able to open the report from our website, or would prefer a paper copy sent home with your child, please let the school office know and we will be happy to provide one for you.

Kind regards,

Mrs Broom

