

Derwent Vale Primary and Nursery School

William Street, Great Clifton, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 1WA

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, supported by leaders at other levels and all the staff, has improved teaching and raised achievement. Morale is very high among staff and their skills have improved.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in this caring and inclusive community where all are welcome.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They know their pupils well and know precisely what each pupil's next steps in learning are.
- Children get off to a good start in early years and make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception Year most are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Achievement is good in all year groups. From their different starting points, all groups make at least good progress during their time in school.
- Governors know the school very well. They use their knowledge to challenge and support the school very effectively. They are well aware of the strengths of the school and have an accurate picture of where improvements need to be made.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and plays a key part in developing pupils into confident well-rounded individuals.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing and spelling is not as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not learn their spellings securely in Key Stages 1 and 2 and accurate spelling is not always insisted upon by their teachers.
- When pupils write, they are not always shown what the required structure for that type of writing is and do not always know what a successful piece of writing looks like.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in lessons and part-lessons and conducted one observation jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils, and key staff and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils and observed them at play at break times and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at many key documents including: school improvement planning; minutes of governing body meetings; tracking of pupil progress; pupils' work; attendance information and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and child protection arrangements.
- The inspector had informal discussions with parents at the start and end of the school day. He took into account 22 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and 10 questionnaires completed by the staff. He also considered the school's own survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing throughout the school, including at a senior level in recent years.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-aged classes, one for early years, one for Years 1 and 2, one for Years 3 and 4 and one for Years 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise attainment further, especially in writing and spelling by:
 - ensuring that correct spellings are learnt thoroughly and insisted upon throughout Key Stages 1 and 2
 - making sure that when pupils write in different subjects they are familiar with the structure of that type of writing
 - providing pupils with a clear picture of what successful writing looks like for different audiences and purposes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the senior leader and governing body, is relentless in the drive and ambition to ensure that all pupils do well.
- All leaders at different levels rigorously check the quality of teaching and learning and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching over time. All staff have targets that are set through the management of their performance and these are linked to pupils' achievement and the school's priorities.
- The school's tracking system rigorously checks all pupils' achievement regularly and as a result, extra support for pupils can be given in a timely manner. This demonstrates the school's unswerving commitment to making sure that all pupils have the opportunity to do equally well.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are extensive, within lessons, through the programme of visits and visitors and the many after-school clubs and activities. The school is proud of its sporting and musical successes in recent competitions. Traditional British values are woven throughout the new curriculum, which captures the interests of the pupils well.
- The school has worked hard to forge strong relationships with parents and most are very positive about the work of the school. Parents commented that they are particularly pleased with the way all staff go the 'extra mile' to make sure their child is safe and happy.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to provide extra support that helps pupils to catch up with others. They also use the sport funding effectively and as a result, all pupils benefit from a greater variety of sports activities and competitions, which promote their physical well-being.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are highly effective and ensure that the school provides an extremely safe environment.
- The local authority provides effective light-touch support and has responded rapidly when asked for guidance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - This is an effective and experienced governing body which has a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas where they believe it could develop further. They have a good understanding of pupils' achievement throughout the school because they are kept well informed by leaders and because they actively seek information through their regular visits to the school. Governors use this information to ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account. They have a good overview of the quality of teaching and are well informed about the performance of staff and the school's decision to reward teachers' performance. The governing body has a good understanding of the extra funding for the pupil premium and sport and monitor the impact these funds make to achievement and physical well-being. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. Governors are highly committed, dedicated and ambitious for the school to improve further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well, both in class and when out of class. They are unfailingly polite and courteous and respectful to adults and to one another. Older pupils care for and about younger pupils and provide excellent role models.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Classrooms are typically calm and orderly places where lessons can proceed without interruption.
- There is a very effective system of rewards and sanctions which pupils value and which they say that adults apply fairly.
- Pupils develop a love of learning and say that their teachers are 'brilliant'.
- Pupils value the opportunities to play a part in running the school and take their responsibilities very seriously. There is an active school council and other roles they take on include sports leaders and acting as monitors in classrooms.
- Attendance varies and is typically above average. However, in such a small school the absence of a very small number of pupils can have a disproportionate effect and give misleading impressions. The school is working very hard to encourage all pupils to attend regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and when on visits. They say that adults work very hard to make sure that they are secure at all times and parents agree.
- Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of different risks. They have a high level of knowledge about the dangers associated with the Internet and a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using it.
- Pupils fully understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They agree that there was some bullying in the past, but are insistent that none occurs now. They are vigilant in looking out for any signs of bullying and know what to do if any were to occur. They say that in their 'family school' it would neither be expected nor tolerated.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over time is typically good and there is some that is outstanding.
- Teachers typically have strong subject knowledge and an infectious enthusiasm for learning that enthuses pupils, who respond accordingly and are eager learners. Pupils in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class thoroughly enjoyed being able to use words like repugnant, rancid and sleek to describe foods they had experienced during a trip to a local supermarket.
- Teachers use their detailed knowledge of where each pupil is in their learning to plan lessons that challenge all pupils. Pupils say that their teachers go out of their way to make sure that learning is interesting and fun.
- The teaching of reading is given a high focus and pupils' comprehension and interest in books are well developed. The school has worked hard to encourage pupils to read and the vast majority read frequently in school and at home. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and types of book.
- Pupils' mathematical understanding is developed well through well-planned lessons which incorporate a variety of resources that help pupils get to grips with difficult concepts. Pupils particularly enjoyed using chocolate bars and pizzas to explore fractions.
- Pupils enjoy writing and write regularly and often at length. However, their progress in developing their writing skills is slowed, because some make too many simple spelling mistakes because they do not learn correct spellings thoroughly enough. They also do not have a clear understanding of the requirements of different types of text, such as making an argument or writing a report of a visit, nor of what successful writing looks like in different genres.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning effectively. Their detailed knowledge of the needs of individuals and their skills in providing support mean that pupils make the same good progress as others.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide helpful comments and suggestions about how to improve their work. Pupils routinely respond to these suggestions and make the improvements. However, correcting spellings and insisting on pupils spelling accurately in all subjects are not consistent.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's starting points vary from year to year. Typically they join with skills that are broadly typical for their age, but below in communication, language and literacy and also in numeracy. The majority now leave Year 6 with attainment that is above that expected nationally, especially in reading and mathematics. However, standards in writing and spelling are not as high.
- Over time, achievement has risen, especially in reading and mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that recent variable results in the mathematics tests did not reflect the true picture of good achievement. The reason is that because of very small numbers in year groups, one or two individuals can have a disproportionate effect on overall statistics.
- The school's most recent information for the current Year 6 pupils indicates that a significant proportion of pupils are on track to make more than the progress expected of them, particularly in reading and mathematics. The proportion in writing is expected to be smaller.
- Pupils make a very good start in early years in learning to read and this is successfully built on in Key Stage 1. In 2014, an above average proportion of pupils reached the required standard in the phonics screening check. Pupils' skills in reading continue to develop throughout Key Stage 2, leading to above average standards.

- Progress in writing is slower. Pupils are given many opportunities to write and are enthusiastic writers. However, they are not always clear about the required structures of different types of text and do not always know the characteristics of successful writing. Some pupils' spelling is not always accurate because they do not learn their spellings thoroughly enough.
- Pupils develop a wide range of mathematical skills and are able to use these skills to solve problems which become more and more complicated throughout their time in school.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good. They are suitably challenged with work that is hard enough and supported well to attain high standards that are at least three terms ahead of others in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. The support they receive from skilled adults who know their needs very well is well planned and effective.
- Extra support is provided for disadvantaged pupils who require it. These pupils typically make good progress from their different starting points and reach standards that are similar to others in reading and approximately three terms behind others in the school and nationally in writing and mathematics.

The early years provision is good

- The early years provision is very well led by a highly effective leader ably supported by an enthusiastic and committed team who make sure that children get off to a good start and make very good progress.
- The team make every effort to ensure that children settle quickly. Nursery children benefit from being with older children in the Reception Year. They absorb all the routines that help learning and quickly become curious and eager learners.
- Children benefit from teaching that is typically good or better. Children have many different tasks and opportunities to learn and are encouraged to find things out for themselves and be creative. Children absolutely loved creating art in the style of Jackson Pollock in the outside area.
- Safety is paramount and adults go to great lengths to ensure that children are safe at all times. There are well-thought-out procedures for the start and end of the school day and when playing outside.
- Overall, most children start with the skills and knowledge they need to start learning. However, a number of children have skills in communication, language and literacy and in numeracy that are below those that are typical of children their age. The staff work hard to help these children catch up and so children make good progress in the early years. By the end of the Reception Year, most children typically reach a good level of development and are ready for learning in Year 1, which is a significant improvement in recent years.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112239
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	448432

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Holiday
Headteacher	Frances Edmondson
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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