

# Gosforth CE School

Wasdale Road, Gosforth, Seascale, CA20 1AZ

**Inspection dates** 12-13 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, especially in Key Stage 2; many exceed expectations, especially in mathematics and reading.
- By the time they leave most pupils have attained standards well in excess of the national average.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are given good support to help them meet ambitious expectations.
- Pupils respond to the high expectations of teachers by behaving well and working hard. Pupils are happy and enjoy school and, as a result, absence is much lower than average.
- Teaching and learning are good and some, especially in Key Stage 2, is outstanding. Teachers help pupils to enjoy learning by making lessons interesting.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a good understanding of the relative strengths and development needs of teachers and works systematically to improve teaching.
- Governance is good, ensuring that the headteacher and staff are held to account and that the school is on a secure financial footing.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More needs to be done to bring progress in writing up to the high standards found in mathematics and reading.
- Children in the Reception class are not given enough opportunities to learn through playing and exploring, especially outdoors.
- There are inconsistencies in the way that pupils' progress is assessed.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed large parts of five lessons and lesser parts of three others.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority and discussions took place with pupils and staff. The inspector took into account the views of the four responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also responses to a similar questionnaire circulated by the governing body
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and the school's own data about current pupils' progress.
- Documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and school improvement were looked at.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportions of pupils supported at school action, and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need, are below average. The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium is also lower than average. There are currently no looked after children at the school and nearly all pupils are White British.
- The school exceeds the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for attainment and progress.
- A breakfast, after-school and holiday club, hosted by the adjacent nursery, is open to pupils from the school. It is not managed by the school's governing body and will be inspected separately.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing so that progress and attainment match the high standards found in mathematics and reading by:
    - carrying out a thorough analysis of the relative strengths and weaknesses within the subject
    - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work encourages style, organisation and composition rather than making simple comments about effort and presentation
    - encouraging writing at greater length across the curriculum and reducing the use of worksheets
    - generating a greater sense of celebration by displaying pupils' best writing
    - ensuring that pupils understand the quality of writing that is needed to attain successively higher levels.
  - Ensure that children in the Reception class are given more opportunity to learn through play and exploration by:
    - making better use of the well appointed outdoor learning area
    - reducing the proportion of adult-directed activities.
  - Improve the rigour and consistency of assessment procedures by:
    - checking and moderating the accuracy of baseline assessments of children when they join the Reception class and transfer to Year 1
    - ensuring that the marking and annotation of pupils' work is always accurate and useful in helping pupils to understand what they are getting right and how they can improve their work.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- On entry to the Reception class, children are at a broadly average level of learning and development. By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are well above average in all subjects and especially so in mathematics and reading. This has been the case for most of the past five years. In two of the past four years, results were significantly above national averages for all subjects.
- The assessment of children's skills and knowledge when they first start school, and the subsequent tracking of their progress as they move into Year 1, while improving, is not yet sharp enough to capture an accurate view of children's skills and early progress. Nevertheless, despite the underdeveloped assessment routines, children get off to a good start, learn quickly and make fast progress.
- While children do well in the Reception class, a secure balance has yet to be achieved between what children learn for themselves through playing, exploring, creating and thinking critically, and through what they are taught and directed to do by adults.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 is above average but has dipped from being significantly so over the past two years, mainly because of a slight decline in reading. The most recent data from Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show that, although the proportion of pupils meeting national expectations for reading was slightly lower than the national average, the proportion of pupils exceeding expectations was almost double the national average.
- The very few pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs achieve well, often performing in line with or above national averages for all pupils. This is because potential difficulties are identified quickly and effective support put in place. There is very little difference between the achievement of the few pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium and any other pupils.
- Girls tend to outperform boys, especially at Key Stage 1. The school is fully aware of this and has taken steps to address it. For instance, staff ensure that books and resources reflect their different interests and that tasks offer equal interest to boys and girls.
- There are examples of outstanding progress, especially in mathematics at Key Stage 2, where over a half of all pupils exceeded age-related expectations at the end of Year 6. While attainment in English overall is above average, pupils' attainment in writing is lower than the high standards achieved in reading.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is normally good and occasionally outstanding. The strongest teaching observed during the inspection was in the Year 5/6 classroom. This tallies with monitoring observations carried out by the headteacher and the local authority.
- There is no record of any inadequate teaching. During the inspection teachers showed considerable perception about the strengths and weaknesses of the lessons that were observed and demonstrated that they learned quickly about how teaching could be improved.
- Typically, lessons are well planned to meet individual needs. Teachers start each lesson with a clear idea of what they expect each pupil to learn during the session. They make their expectations clear to the class and they endeavour to vary work to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. Occasionally, the variation in task is misjudged, with a few pupils finding the work too easy and a few finding it too hard.
- The best teaching is characterised by lessons conducted at a good pace, and with suitable challenge. This is facilitated by constant checking that pupils are keeping up and none are being left behind. Astute questioning allows pupils of all abilities to contribute equally to the lesson. Adult support for pupils in classrooms is generally good.
- Teachers take great care to present pupils with stimulating learning environments. Classrooms are bright and displays contain a considerable amount of information to support

learning. As the inspection took place in the first week of the new school year the lack of pupils' own work on display was understandable but, even allowing for this, there was very little evidence of pupils' best writing being prominently displayed and celebrated.

- In some classes there is an over-dependency on the use of worksheets. This is counterproductive when they are used to help pupils avoid responsibility for writing to greater length or to avoid presenting their work more independently.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Good behaviour is the norm. In lessons, behaviour is often very good, with pupils concentrating hard, helping each other and being polite to staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know what to do if they are troubled by anything. Inspection evidence supports this view. A few parents disagree or say they wish to be better informed. Nevertheless, every parent who took the opportunity to express a view said that they would recommend this school to another parent.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils are a central tenet of the school. Pupils are extremely courteous to visitors and charm through their inquisitiveness.
- There is no evidence of bullying, harassment or discrimination on record in the past year, although staff and pupils report that disagreements and rough play do occur on the playground from time to time. There have been no exclusions.
- Attendance is above average. All absence is recorded correctly and there is no persistent absenteeism.
- Great care is taken by the school to support the safeguarding and care of pupils. Thorough checks are made on all staff to ensure their suitability for working with children. Good attention is paid to ensuring that the school premises are safe and secure and that health and safety regulations are met.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- For many years the school has been led well by a dedicated headteacher who maintains high standards, ensures the school meets the needs of all pupils, whatever their circumstance and has sought continuous improvement.
- Teaching is good because the headteacher's monitoring of it, both formally and informally, is perceptive and accurate. Where weaknesses are identified, support is quickly put in place and its impact analysed. Where strengths are identified staff are given the praise they deserve. As a result morale is high.
- There has been a well-planned programme of staff training in recent years. Some of this is driven by the findings from thorough and consistent performance management; some of it by wider educational initiatives. Recently, staff have received training in the moderation and assessment of pupils' work, an area identified by this inspection as needing improvement.
- Recognising the need to improve pupils' writing to the point where it matches the excellence of their reading and number work, leaders and managers are making a concerted drive to raise standards. The impact is clearly evident in improvements in pupils' reading but has been slower to impact on their writing. This is because the marking and annotation policy for writing is not followed consistently.
- The curriculum is good. It promotes numeracy and literacy well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given good support to access every opportunity offered. Weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum have been aired earlier in this report, they refer mainly to the need for more continuous provision and better provision for outside learning.
- The school manages its finances well and is forward looking and innovative. For example, by securing a large grant to install solar panels, it is currently energy self-sufficient.
- The governance of the school is good. The governing body plays a full and important part in supporting and challenging the school leaders. Members of the governing body

demonstrate a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in setting the agenda for improvement and monitoring it.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112294
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	403176

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	93
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Pratt
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Corran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 February 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 725244
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