

Great Orton Primary School

Great Orton, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA5 6NA

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 4 does not always match the individual needs of pupils with different levels of ability, particularly that of more able pupils.
- While pupils' progress across the school is improving, it varies between classes. This means that pupils' overall achievement is no better than satisfactory.
- The school ensures that all staff have opportunities for training and development, but does not always check that these have been effective in improving the quality of teaching in classes.
- While strong leadership from the headteacher has led to improvement since the last inspection, other school leaders and key members of the governing body are new to their roles and it is too early to see a measurable impact of their work in improving the school.
- Children in the Reception Year receive too much direction from adults and do not always have enough opportunities to choose their own play activities and develop their independence as learners.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning, but in some lessons behaviour is not as good as it should be because pupils do not fully understand the work they are expected to do and cannot complete tasks independently.

The school has the following strengths

- The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and pupils benefit from increased opportunities to use their skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) across a wide range of subjects.
- Relationships are strong. Parents feel very welcome in school and pupils know that adults in the school look after them well and are willing to listen to any concerns.
- The headteacher is committed to improving the quality of teaching and has a clear view of what needs to be done.
- The quality of teachers' marking and assessment has improved and this means that pupils are given helpful guidance on how to improve their work and understand their individual targets for improving their reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and small group sessions.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents, members of the governing body, a local authority representative and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of 31 on-line questionnaires (Parent View), a letter from a parent and seven staff questionnaires.
- A range of documents was looked at, including the school's data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size primary school that has an increasing number of pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils entering the school other than at the normal time is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action and those supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and no child is at an early stage of acquiring English.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- There is nursery provision on the school site. This provision is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of the inspection but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching until it is good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that individual teachers make good use of training and development opportunities to improve their teaching and that school leaders then discuss with them the difference this is making to stretch more able pupils.
- Increase the proportion of pupils in Years 1 to 4 who consistently make good or outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure that teachers always plan tasks and activities in lessons which closely match the needs of individual learners and improving pupils' rates of progress.
- Improve leadership by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders and governors who are new to their roles so that they can support the headteacher in his drive to improve teaching and pupils' progress more effectively.
- Improve the independent learning skills of children in the Reception class by:
 - giving children more opportunities to choose activities for themselves and reducing the amount of time they spend on tasks directed by adults.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- While cohorts vary, most children enter the school with those levels of skills and development which are typical for their age. They make expected progress and by the end of the Reception Year their standards are broadly average in all the areas of learning.
- The amount of progress pupils make in Key Stages 1 and 2 is variable and this is why achievement is not yet good. Too few pupils exceed the expected rate of progress, because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 4 where tasks and activities are not always accurately matched to pupils' needs. However, in contrast, the pace of learning accelerates in the older year groups and most Year 6 pupils are making better than expected progress.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics is average and improving. An increasing number of more-able pupils reach the highest possible standards at the end of Year 6. However, the progress of more-able pupils is not rapid enough in Years 1 to 4.
- Standards in reading are average and improving because pupils have many opportunities throughout the school day to practise their skills across a range of subjects and through good use of ICT. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read confidently and with some fluency from a range of suitable texts.
- The school works hard to promote equality of opportunity. Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, those who have special educational needs and those who enter the school other than at the normal starting time benefit from the small class sizes in the school and also from the extra help which is provided for them individually or in small groups. They make good progress from their individual starting points.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some teaching is good or outstanding, but too much is only adequate. When teaching English and mathematics in Years 1 to 4, teachers do not always plan activities for the full range of ages and abilities in each class. As a result, work is sometimes either too difficult or too easy for some pupils. This sometimes confuses younger or less-able pupils and means that older and more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to reach their full potential. This explains why overall progress in the school is no better than expected.
- A further weakness in teaching that needs to be tackled is to reduce the amount of time younger pupils spend sitting on the carpet while teachers introduce work. Where this happens, pupils become restless and their progress slows.
- Where teaching is most successful, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are motivated to work hard on interesting practical activities. For example, in one lesson the teacher skilfully linked pupils' topic work on the experiences of soldiers during the Second World War to a practical scientific investigation using heat to distil pure water from salt water.
- Teachers have good relations with pupils. As a result, pupils are confident in asking for help when it is needed, answer questions confidently and contribute to class discussions.
- Recent improvements are strengthening the quality of teachers' marking. Pupils are increasingly taking good account of the comments teachers make about their work and using the guidance to strengthen their work towards individual targets for improvement.
- Teachers set homework tasks which effectively support pupils in continuing their learning at home. The majority of parents are very happy with this. A small minority would prefer to have more homework set, but equally, a few parents believe that there is too much.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They enjoy coming to school and say that they feel safe because the adults are always fair and willing to listen.
- Of those parents who responded to the survey, a small minority felt that bullying was not effectively dealt with by the school. Inspection evidence found that the school takes bullying very seriously indeed and actively discourages it in any form. Pupils say that there is very little bullying in school of any kind and most of them understand the difference between bullying and simply 'falling out'. There are no recorded racist incidents in the school.
- While most pupils behave sensibly in and around school and treat one another with respect, behaviour is not yet good because behaviour in lessons is not always as good as it should be. This is because the tasks and activities set are not always suitable for pupils of different abilities and they start to lose interest in the lesson. As a result, some pupils become distracted and their behaviour dips a little.
- Most pupils arrive at school on time and attendance is average. The provision of a breakfast club supports working families well and contributes to pupils' punctuality.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher teaches for half of the school week and provides an excellent role model for less experienced teachers and those who are newly qualified. He provides strong leadership, has high ambitions for the school and knows how these can be achieved. Other leaders are not yet sufficiently skilled to be able to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and this is why leadership and management are not yet good.
- The headteacher increasingly observes lessons, checks teachers' planning and on the quality of pupils' written work. This is helping to sharpen further the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance. As a result, the current school development plan is based on a clear view of what works well and what needs to be done and is helping to improve achievement.
- With the exception of the headteacher, all teachers are relatively new to the school and, while there are systems in place to appraise teachers' performance, it is too early to see a measurable impact of this on improving teaching. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified, support is provided, but the arrangements for checking that this support has been effective are not yet firmly embedded. As a result, some valuable opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and hold teachers' accountable for pupils' learning and progress are missed. This means that overall the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement remain satisfactory.
- The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils say they enjoy the topics, the way that subjects are linked, and they particularly appreciate visits to places of interest. They talk enthusiastically of a recent whole school event when they relived some of the experiences of children evacuated to the country during wartime, including a train journey armed with gas masks and the opportunity to visit a shop and find out just how little food a ration card would provide. The excursion also provided opportunities to explore some of the geographical features of their wider locality.
- The local authority has provided a high level of support to the school since the monitoring inspection in November 2011 which has been effective in beginning to raise pupils' achievement and helping the school on its journey of improvement.
- The school works hard to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whole school assemblies encourage pupils to think about those less fortunate than themselves, to respect and value other cultures and to reflect on their own actions. Additionally, links with another school in a neighbouring urban locality help pupils to understand their unique place in the context of a diverse modern society.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are increasingly able to challenge school staff. Although many governors are new to

their duties and responsibilities, they understand the link between what the school provides and how well the pupils do. Governors are willing to question and challenge teachers and understand that pupils have underperformed in the past. Governors are keen to support school functions and, under the leadership of the headteacher, play a central role in shaping the strategic direction of the school and taking important spending decisions. This is seen in their recent decision to expand and improve the school buildings, particularly in relation to the indoor and outdoor provision for children in the Reception class. Governors are aware that pupil premium funding has been allocated to provide help for pupils who are at risk of underachieving through teaching and support in small groups. They know that the school has used the funding effectively to improve the progress these pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. The governing body gives good support to the headteacher in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, particularly regarding the safety of pupils in and around the school.

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	112110
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	405375

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellen Whitfield
Headteacher	Jamie Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2010
Telephone number	01228 711602
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