

Caldew Lea School

Ashley Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7BE

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- Since the last inspection, governors, leaders and managers have worked closely together to successfully improve the quality of teaching, raise standards and help pupils to make faster progress.
- From starting points which are below those typical for their age, pupils achieve well. In 2012 pupils reached standards in line with the national average in English and mathematics.
- The school is a welcoming place which provides very good all round support for pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use interesting resources to engage pupils' interest so they enjoy learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They feel safe in school. Most are kind to each other and respectful to staff. Pupils know what is expected of them and behaviour is well managed.
- Attendance is rising and is now average.
- All pupils get an equal chance to do well. Extra money (the pupil premium) is well used to support the learning of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Consequently, the gap between their progress and that of other pupils is narrowing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A very small number of lessons require improvement because the pace of work is not fast enough to enable all pupils to achieve their very best.
- In some lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to do practical work and investigate and solve problems. They are not always given clear guidance by which they can measure their progress.
- Teachers have not yet fully shared their expertise and best ideas for lessons.
- Although the school works closely with parents, it recognises that more can be done to help them support their children's learning. This includes providing more information and encouraging more parents to attend sessions about the ways in which mathematics and English are taught.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons and part-lessons. They also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy to small groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Nineteen responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered as well as those from the school's own parental survey and questionnaires from school staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Tim Nelson | Additional Inspector |
| Nina Heron | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a similar proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Offsite provision is provided for a very small number of pupils with particular individual needs at the Carlisle pupil referral unit and at James Rennie special school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so every lesson is at least good and more are outstanding by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to learn through doing practical activities and investigating and solving problems
 - increasing the pace of lessons so that all pupils can achieve their best, whatever their ability
 - further sharing teachers' expertise and their best ideas for lessons more widely
 - giving pupils clear guidance in all lessons so they can measure their progress accurately and quickly move on to take the next steps in their learning.
- Work even more closely with all parents to help them support their children's learning by:
 - providing more information sessions for parents to enable them to understand the way in which English and mathematics are taught, and encouraging more parents to attend.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills below those typical for their age, especially in the prime areas of communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. They settle quickly and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school's own tracking data, work in pupils' books and that displayed on walls all confirm the good progress pupils continue to make as they move through the school.
- Results in tests at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2011 partly because changes of staff affected the continuity of the education pupils received. In 2012 standards rose markedly in both mathematics and English and were in line with those found nationally.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading and most reach standards which are close to the national average by the end of Year 6. Year 1 pupils achieved well in recent phonics (the sounds that letters make) tests.
- The very small number of pupils who are educated off site are making good progress, attend regularly, are kept safe and behave well.
- The school spends additional funds (the pupil premium) wisely on reducing the size of classes and providing more individual and small-group teaching. Consequently, pupils eligible for free school meals and those in care make the same good progress as their peers and the gaps between their attainment (as measured by their test scores at the end of Year 6) and that of their classmates is narrowing.
- In lessons pupils were seen to be working hard and concentrating on the task in hand. For instance, in an English lesson pupils made good progress and learnt how to include more emotion in their writing as they acted out adverbs such as 'aggressively' and 'obnoxiously'.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they receive timely and well-focused help from teachers and teaching assistants who understand their needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some lessons have elements of outstanding teaching. A very few lessons require improvement.
- The youngest children are given a good balance of interesting and exciting activities to choose from both indoors and out. For example, they enjoyed learning as teachers skilfully guided them through activities such as preparing food for Santa's reindeer, making a seasonal calendar and putting together pom-poms to make a snow man.
- Pupils' social and moral development is promoted particularly well in lessons. Pupils in Year 2 were excited about what they were doing but still took turns and cooperated extremely well as they worked in teams to construct a 'pass the parcel' game.
- In most lessons teachers use a range of activities that engage pupils' interest and the lesson moves along at a brisk pace. Teachers' explanations are very clear and pupils know what is expected of them. Work is carefully planned and in most lessons is well matched to pupils' needs. In a few lessons the pace of learning is slower and pupils are not fully challenged.
- In a few lessons pupils are asked to spend too long listening and do not have enough opportunities to do practical activities and investigate and solve problems. Teachers do not always give pupils clear guidance so they can measure their progress during the lesson and quickly move on when they have achieved the first stage.
- Pupils' books are marked thoroughly so pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. A strength of many teachers' marking is that they give pupils an opportunity to respond to what they have said and so hold a conversation about how to make their work better.

- In lessons staff check carefully the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those supported by extra pupil premium money and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils are given extra help if and when this is needed to help them catch up with their work. They are skilfully taught, often in small groups, to make sure they do not fall behind in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well. In a busy school yard, where space is limited, they share toys and equipment sensibly and show respect for each other. Behaviour records show that exclusions are very rare and any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with promptly.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance and this is now average.
- During the inspection inspectors saw numerous examples of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as all pupils and their teachers worked together, at this very exciting time of the year, to put on the school Christmas production. Their singing, humorous acting and traditional nativity play gave all pupils a chance to 'shine' and were much appreciated and well attended by parents.
- A very few parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Inspectors followed up these concerns and found pupils' behaviour to be good. Any incidents of challenging behaviour are very well managed by staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand that there are different sorts of bullying and are confident that, if they have any worries or concerns about being bullied themselves, staff will quickly sort these out. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe and have a sensible attitude to taking risks.
- Pupils and their parents are very appreciative of the personal and emotional support the staff give. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are particularly well supported by the school. The calm and welcoming atmosphere the school provides allows all pupils to fully concentrate on learning and so achieve well.

The leadership and management are good

- Under the calm, perceptive and experienced leadership of the headteacher, governors, senior leaders and managers and all staff have successfully worked together to improve the school.
- Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and have identified appropriate areas that still need improvement. These include further sharing of teachers' expertise and their best ideas for good or better lessons across all subjects and year groups.
- The arrangements to check the performance of staff are well managed. Careful monitoring of lessons and good-quality training for teachers and teaching assistants have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers feel valued and, consequently, morale is good.
- Staff are well trained in risk assessment, child protection and safety procedures. All safeguarding requirements are met.
- All pupils are given good opportunities to succeed. The shrewd use of extra funding (the pupil premium) is helping to ensure that any gaps between the attainment of different groups of pupils are narrowing.
- The school works closely with parents and this partnership has helped to bring about improvements in attendance. However, the majority of parents who responded to the school's own questionnaire said they would like to be able to support their children's learning better. The school recognises there is more that can be done to provide information for parents and to encourage them to attend sessions about the way in which mathematics and English are taught.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school. In the last year a local authority

review which, rightly, recognised the progress the school has made was particularly helpful.

- The curriculum has a good balance between a clear focus on developing basic skills in mathematics and English and a creative approach to linking subjects together. A wide range of enrichment activities give pupils many extra exciting opportunities to visit different museums and churches, to stay at an outdoor centre and to hone their football skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well, are suitably trained and take the initiative in checking its work and helping it to improve. Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching, the arrangements to improve the performance of staff and how teachers are rewarded. They hold the school to account for how it spends pupil premium money and for its performance against that of schools nationally.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 112237 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 401248 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 292 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sue Chappell |
| Headteacher | Ian Johnston |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 March 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01228 526611 |
| Fax number | 01228 525765 |
| Email address | office@caldewlea.cumbria.sch.uk |

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