

Montreal CofE Primary School

Ennerdale Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria, CA25 5LW

Inspection dates 12–13 December 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

- Teaching is not good enough; a little of the teaching is inadequate. Lessons are not always planned effectively and sometimes pupils are not challenged enough.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not make enough progress; reading is not sufficiently well taught.
- Sometimes the marking of pupils' work is not as good as it should be.
- The school was improving well until a year ago but, more recently, improvement has slowed.
- Pupils behave very well when they are being supervised but do not show enough initiative to take more responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
- Leaders and managers have had to make big savings; very little money has been available for staff training and many staff have been made redundant. As a result, teaching requires improvement.
- Governors are not paying sufficient attention to making sure that the school gets value for money from highly paid staff.

The school has the following strengths

- There has been consistent improvement in the achievement of older pupils over the last three years and, on the evidence of inspection, this improvement is continuing this year. Year 6 pupils made very good progress in mathematics last year and achieved much better than expected.
- Pupils are well cared for and are kept safe; parents are very happy about this.
- Mainly good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 is helping pupils to catch up in all subjects.
- Attendance is better than the national average. Pupils like coming to school. A learning mentor works very effectively with pupils and their families when difficulties arise.
- Achievement in its many forms is strongly celebrated; pupils are helped to feel good about themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons. He saw each class and each teacher twice.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Many informal conversations were held with staff and pupils.
- The views of three parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account when judgements were being made.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and information about their progress.
- Documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding, attendance, school improvement and self-evaluation were considered.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Numbers of pupils have been falling for several years.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals) is much larger than average.
- Many more pupils than average have special educational needs. The proportion supported at the level known as school action is broadly average but the proportion at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school. The last permanent headteacher left in February 2012, having been in post for just over two years. A retired deputy headteacher was appointed on a temporary basis for a few months until a newly appointed headteacher could take up post. Unfortunate circumstances prevented this. A new headteacher has now been appointed to take up post in January 2013 and the acting headteacher retires at the end of the autumn term.
- Current leaders, managers and the governing body inherited serious financial difficulties. They were not responsible for incurring them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to make it good or better by:
 - making sure that weaker teachers have the opportunity to see what good and better teaching looks like and where their own falls short
 - making sure that any newly qualified teachers are better supported than at present
 - improving the teaching of reading, especially at Key Stage 1
 - helping teachers to understand the importance of telling pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - making sure that, in every lesson, pupils are given work that fully challenges them
 - improving the quality of planning so that it clearly identifies what pupils are expected to learn rather than focusing on how the lesson will be taught.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - quickly reviewing the school's evaluation of its work to establish a more accurate picture of the school to better inform priorities for improvement
 - making sure that targets set for improved performance amongst staff are more demanding and then taking quicker action to hold underperforming staff to account
 - making sure that training to help improve teaching and raise standards becomes a priority area for expenditure, even in the face of budget cuts.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Many children join the Reception class with below-average skills and abilities. They join Year 1 having made some progress but not enough to reach the standards expected for their age. There had been a generally downward trend in standards at the end of Year 2 until last year, when some improvements started to be seen, especially in writing. Last year no pupils reached a level higher than that expected for their age.
- The teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 requires improvement. In a check made last year not enough pupils met the expected standard for understanding how letters and sounds are linked.
- Things improve rapidly in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 standards rise from below to broadly average and well above in mathematics. Results have continued to improve over the last three years.
- The reason why progress is better in Key Stage 2 than it is among younger pupils is clear. During the inspection most of the teaching in Key Stage 2 was good but for younger pupils most of it required improvement. This is a pattern that has also been noted by leaders and managers and the local authority.
- Not all pupils make similar progress. A few lower- and middle-attaining pupils do better than expected but a few higher-attaining ones miss their targets in English. Last year everyone met their target in writing but a few fell short in reading. There are only very minor differences in the achievement of different groups. Boys and girls make very similar progress to each other and pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make much the same progress as other pupils. Pupils with special needs generally make as much headway from their starting points as others in the school.
- Very nearly a half of all Year 6 pupils exceeded expectations in mathematics last year. As a part of the management of their work, teachers had been set a target to raise standards in mathematics by improving their teaching. Every teacher met this target and the results are clear to see.
- The recent award of 'Adventure Learning School' is particularly significant. It is already reaping the benefit of improving pupils' writing, such as overcoming an aversion to writing when they enthusiastically write instructions about fixing a bike.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Most teaching requires improvement but for pupils in Years 5 and 6, and some in Year 4, teaching is often good.
- There are some joyous moments in classrooms, such as when older pupils get carried away with their dreams when learning how to sing 'Jingle Bells' in French or decorate 'cookie' boxes to give away as presents. There are also golden moments when younger pupils rehearse or perform nativity plays. These are times when good teaching clearly adds to pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning.
- Where teaching is weaker, the same sense of enjoyment is not developed and pupils pursue mundane activities with little sense of purpose. In a weak lesson nearly half of the pupils in the class told the inspector that the work was too easy and either that they had done it before or did not know what they were doing. Teaching of this quality is not being picked up and dealt with quickly enough.
- Mathematics teaching is good. At the start of last year, every teacher was set a target to improve their mathematics teaching. They did what was expected, and it worked: teachers are capable of responding effectively to clear directives.
- There is not enough emphasis on teaching pupils how to read. There are lots of books in the school but even in the top three classes, where teaching is best, pupils are not being given sufficient encouragement to read books either for fun or to get information from them. This was

clearly evident in the very few books being used by pupils to research their topic on the Victorians.

- Teachers are not making it clear enough to pupils about what they have to do to make their work better. A few add helpful comments when they mark pupils' work but there is no system to make sure that every pupil knows what they need to do next to improve their work.
- There is no common approach to planning. Sometimes it is taken directly from commercial websites which give a step-by-step guide about how to teach a lesson but do not make it clear what pupils will learn as a result.
- There is not enough variation in work for pupils of different ability, but in some classes lower-attaining pupils do well because they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants. Teachers manage behaviour sensitively. They have a good understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. With this understanding they nearly always know when a pupil is troubled, preoccupied or just being naughty.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- A strength of the school is the way it understands the community it serves. Pupils are kept very safe and are well cared for in school.
- The school works very effectively with many other agencies to extend this quality of care and support beyond the school day.
- The school's learning mentor supports a lot of this work. She brings together a clear picture of the difficulties being faced by some pupils and their families. This understanding has the added benefit of reducing pupil absence. Attendance is currently well above average. Very strong links are being forged between the school and parents.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and when they are being supervised closely. There are a few lapses at other times. It is mainly this that makes behaviour and safety less than good.
- Pupils are not taking enough responsibility for their own learning and actions and are relying too much on adults to support them. They do not make it clear enough when they need harder work or more help.
- There have been no exclusions in recent years. Records show that there have been no instances of racism but some allegations of bullying. This has usually taken the form of name-calling or pupils stopping being friends. Whenever allegations are made they are quickly and effectively followed up.
- Parents are happy with the school. They say that it keeps their children safe. A very small minority of staff worry about how well behaviour is managed but the inspector saw no grounds for this concern.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The school is getting better. Results are improving; rapidly in mathematics and steadily in English. Test results for Year 6 pupils have risen over each of the last three years. Two years ago, a monitoring visit by Ofsted reported that good progress had been made since the last inspection. However, the speed of improvement has been hampered by a lack of money and uncertainty over leadership. For several years, the number of pupils on roll had fallen but until recently this was not sufficiently matched by a reduction in staffing. Promotion has been too easily granted in earlier times but this is no longer the case.
- The acting headteacher and governors have steered the school through stormy waters. Staff want to get better at their jobs but they are not always being given enough opportunities through training to do so.
- When all teachers were set a target to raise standards in mathematics last year the result was a great improvement in teaching and learning. Much of this improvement has been made by leaders and managers ensuring that teachers make better use of their substantial experience,

communicate more closely with each other, and organise their lessons better. This year, teachers have been set a similarly appropriate target to improve pupils' literacy.

- Local authority support has been well focused on sustaining the future of the school. Considerable support has been given to the school to resolve financial affairs and to help with staffing reorganisation.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors do their best. Their most important achievement is that the school still survives and that their plans to overcome financial difficulties are working out. Governors have a good understanding of the role the school serves and its place in the community. They recognise that there has been some inertia over the past year while they awaited a new headteacher, but, equally, they have acted quickly to try to appoint a new headteacher. They have also ensured that more challenging targets are being set to help improve teaching. Governors make a good contribution to making sure that the school is safe, and that only adults who have been suitably checked are allowed to work there. Governors make sure that pupil premium funding is used effectively, for instance, to support the work of the learning mentor and to subsidise some of the many trips organised to help broaden pupils' horizons. Governors have been pleased to see that this funding is contributing to the fact that there is very little difference in the progress of pupils entitled to the premium and all other pupils.

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	132170
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	402544

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Melville
Headteacher	N Hercberg, Acting Head
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2010
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