

# Newtown Community Primary School

Newtown Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7LW

**Inspection dates** 19–20 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- While pupils' progress across the school is increasing strongly, this has not yet gone on long enough for all pupils to fully make up lost ground in their learning, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is now much stronger, but inconsistencies remain. Not enough is yet consistently good or better, especially in Key Stage 2, to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always plan their work well enough to get the best out of some pupils.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils have too few opportunities to practise a broader range of mathematics skills or to write at length in a range of subjects.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils are working accurately in lessons. When they mark work, they do not always make clear to pupils how to make their work better in the future or allow time for pupils to act upon the advice given.
- The new subject leadership and management structures are not yet fully effective in helping to increase pupils' progress further.

### The school has the following strengths

- Better quality teaching has ensured that attainment has risen at the end of Year 2 and is rising at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties benefit from outstanding teaching. This enables them to achieve extremely well.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading as a result of good teaching of how to link sounds and letters (phonics).
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils say they feel very safe. Attendance has improved rapidly.
- The headteacher has been relentless in her drive to improve the school and raise the expectations of staff, pupils and parents. In this she has been successful, but she recognises there is more still to do.
- With the governing body and the new deputy headteacher, the headteacher has acted decisively to tackle weak teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement is rising. This is clearly an improving school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair and other members of the governing body. They spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority and a National Leader of Education who works closely with the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s improvement plan; the school’s data relating to pupils’ progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school’s documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in ten lessons taught by five teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher conducted four joint observations of lessons with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on their findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils’ achievement in lessons.
- Too few parents had responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for their opinions to be published. However, inspectors spoke to a group of parents and analysed the school’s own questionnaire of parents’ views.
- Fifteen staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

## Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jim Bennetts

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, although there is a small but significant proportion of pupils, particularly of Polish heritage, who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from military service families) is well above average.
- The school has a designated resource base for pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties. The resource base accommodates pupils, aged five to 11, from across the city.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school shares its site with First Steps Day Nursery and Out of School Facility, which is privately run and will be subject to a separate inspection.
- There is a breakfast club which is privately funded and run by volunteers, as well as many lunchtime and after-school clubs which are managed by the headteacher and run voluntarily by staff.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A monitoring visit conducted by an Ofsted inspector in June 2011 raised some very serious concerns about the school's performance.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2011.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, particularly in Key Stage 2, to increase further pupils' progress and attainment in writing and mathematics by:
  - using the school's information about how well pupils are learning, to set work which is always hard enough for all pupils and allows them more opportunities to work together
  - ensuring that all teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons; that they mark work in a way that helps pupils to do better in the future and allows them time to act upon the advice given
  - offering pupils in Key Stage 2 even more opportunities to write at length and practise a broader range of mathematics skills, for example in solving problems related to everyday life, in a variety of subjects
  - embedding the new leadership and management structures within school, through the effective use of training, in order to help subject leaders continue to improve and understand how to accelerate pupils' progress further in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. Due to better teaching, children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, and in recent years attainment has risen significantly at the end of Year 2. However, it is still below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, the school's data and inspection evidence show that for the first time, more-able pupils in Year 2 are on track to attain above average standards for their age.
- In 2012, attainment at the end of Year 6 was well below average in the Year 6 national tests in English and mathematics. This was a year group with a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Specific programmes to boost pupils' progress and better teaching in Year 6 helped pupils make up some of the learning they had lost in previous years, but these were not in place long enough to enable floor standards to be met.
- Inspection evidence and the school's data show that as a result of improvements in teaching in the past two years, pupils currently in Year 6 have made better progress. A greater proportion of pupils than has been the case for a number of years are reaching the standards expected for their age in English and mathematics and some are doing better than this. They are on track to exceed the floor targets.
- Across the school, attainment is rising in writing and mathematics, as pupils catch up on their lost learning. However, their progress is not yet strong enough to enable them to do as well as they should in these subjects, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Inspection evidence and the school's records show that progress in reading is consistently good. It is a success of the headteacher's drive to improve the basic skills that pupils need to achieve in their learning. It comes as a result of good teaching of how to link letters and sounds (phonics) to help pupils read words they are not used to, and of a drive to help pupils enjoy books and read more, in school and at home.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those in the resource base for pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties, make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is as a result of work that is extremely interesting and well suited to their abilities, the excellent support they receive from the designated teaching assistant and the outstanding leadership and teaching of the special needs coordinator.
- The attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap remains between this group and other pupils in the school. The school has identified closing the gap for these pupils as a key issue in teachers' performance management, and where teaching is good the gap is beginning to close. However, the school is very well aware that the attainment of all pupils in the school has been too low and is determined to close the gap for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, from their starting points, as a result of the school's clear understanding of their needs and of how to help them improve quickly in reading, speaking and listening.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and is outstanding in the resource base for pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties. In Key Stage 2, while the school's own monitoring records, the school's data and pupils' books show evidence of teaching which is helping pupils make better progress, especially in Years 5 and 6, there are aspects of teaching in individual lessons that require improvement.
- All teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and show them the skills they will need to use. However, in lessons which require improvement, the time taken to give explanations, and over-direction by the teacher, limit the opportunities for pupils to plan together or to

practise their skills. In an English lesson in the Year 3 and Year 4 class, for example, pupils had to read using expression and gesture. While pupils found the work interesting, the book was too hard and the teacher and teaching assistants did not allow pupils the chance to develop their own ideas.

- While there are good examples of teachers making sure that work is set at the right level, they do not all consistently plan work well enough to get the best out of all pupils. Also, the work planned in some classes in Key Stage 2 does not give pupils enough opportunities to practise their mathematical skills. The same basic skills are practised too regularly and in some lessons teachers ask pupils to do too many examples of the same skill, rather than offering more challenging, real-life problem-solving activities for pupils to practise the skills. Likewise, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and in different subjects.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers helpfully tell pupils how successful they have been in their work. However, some teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work or give them time to act upon any advice given. In lessons, teachers do not always spot where pupils are making mistakes.
- Where teaching is good and outstanding, teachers are very skilled at spotting where pupils are finding difficulties. They work patiently to explain and help pupils make progress. Teachers give simple but highly effective advice that allows pupils to understand how to improve their writing or their mathematics. Examples in both subjects were evident in the Year 1 and Year 2 class, where the teacher gave pupils very clear advice on how to improve their descriptions of Humpty Dumpty. She allowed them time to write and then share together the improvements they had made. Pupils made rapid progress.
- In outstanding teaching in the resource base, the teacher uses exciting activities and games, clear guidelines and activities to engage pupils who find learning difficult. With a very skilful teaching assistant, he enables pupils to make rapid progress in developing a range of social and physical skills, as well as in their reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- Inspectors' analysis of the school's records of behaviour show that behaviour has improved rapidly in the past two years. This is as a result of a determined effort by the headteacher to ensure that teachers, pupils and parents have clear understanding that anything less than good behaviour is unacceptable. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. There are now clear expectations and a consistent system of rewards and sanctions which have helped pupils have a precise understanding of how to behave well. Pupils particularly like the honour of sitting at the 'High Fliers' Table' as a reward for excellent behaviour and work.
- Pupils say that behaviour is now good in their lessons and that any minor misbehaviour is quickly dealt with by their teachers. The needs of a very small number of pupils who have significant behavioural problems are very well managed by the school. Indeed, much excellent behaviour was evident in lessons during the inspection and around the school. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years; although the school has used fixed-term exclusions when necessary, these are few in number.
- As a result of robust initiatives introduced by the school to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time, attendance has improved rapidly and is now average. This is also because learning has become more purposeful and pupils are determined to achieve well in their lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are very clear that any form of bullying is rare and when it does happen, they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with by 'Playground Friends' or adults. They respect one another, work and play well together and are very polite to adults.
- Pupils develop good social skills in the well-organised, lively and safe breakfast and after-school clubs, as well as through the increased responsibilities they have in school, including as librarians. All pupils have been involved in agreeing the school's new rules and policies. The school council is helping to develop the school website and offers ideas to improve the building.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the school. On her appointment, she quickly formed a clear picture of the school's strengths and major weaknesses and she has worked determinedly to raise the expectations of teachers, pupils and parents. With the governing body, she has acted decisively to tackle weak teaching across the school and has ensured that all classes have a full-time teacher who is clearly focused on raising attainment. The desire to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- The school's procedures to check the effectiveness of its performance lead to accurate evaluations and clear, appropriate areas for development. The headteacher has developed high expectations among all staff and given them clear responsibilities in the school. She has skilfully used the expertise of the new deputy headteacher and the special needs coordinator to develop teaching and increase pupils' progress.
- New subject leaders know very clearly what they have to do, and are developing well in their roles. They accept that they are responsible for pupils' progress in their own classes and in subjects across the school. However, these new arrangements have not yet had time to be fully effective and raise pupils' achievement further.
- There are clear procedures and training to help new leaders develop their skills quickly and effectively, including links with outstanding schools in the area. Moreover, leaders are increasingly using their own growing understanding to lead in-school training for others. The benefits of this can be seen in the success in improving pupils' skills in reading.
- The headteacher has improved teaching through a rigorous approach to assessing its quality. She carries out regular observations of teachers, giving firm judgements and offering detailed and precise advice on how teachers can improve. This advice is clearly linked to training programmes which help teachers to become better.
- Performance management is clearly focused on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. Staff are aware that they will only be financially rewarded when their pupils have achieved as well as they should have done, although this has not been the case in the past.
- The headteacher has developed accurate, detailed and effective procedures to collect and analyse data about pupils' attainment and progress. This information is used well to provide leaders with a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making, in different classes, and to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. These initiatives are beginning to ensure that progress is becoming more consistent across the school.
- The curriculum provides good chances for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and their own self-confidence through the 'You Can Shine' programme. However, the headteacher has deliberately focused the curriculum on helping pupils overcome the significant gaps in their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, and in this she has been successful. The school is now developing a broader curriculum that helps pupils see how subjects are connected. Although developing well, this has not yet had time to become fully established and effective.
- While the local authority has worked with the school over a number of years, it is only with the appointment of the new headteacher that its advisory role is becoming effective. The local authority has recognised the ability of the headteacher to improve the school and has supported her strongly. Its advice is helping to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has improved in the past two years. New governors, including a new Chair of the Governing Body, have brought their previous expertise and knowledge of governance to the school. This is helping to offer clear challenge as well as strong support to school leaders. Governors have developed very clear procedures to hold the school to account, carrying out rigorous assessments of the overall provision, including how the pupil premium funding is helping eligible pupils to achieve better. This gives governors a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body has a secure understanding of school data. It has effective procedures to check on pupils' achievement and on the budget,

effectively removing a deficit and securing funds to improve the fabric of the building. With the headteacher, governors have taken, and continue to take, decisive action to tackle weak teaching. They make sure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. They ensure that staff are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm, as well as to improve their teaching skills.

## 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>	112218
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	401245

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elaine Jordan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Manuel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01228 409650
<b>Fax number</b>	01228 593227
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@newtown.cumbria.sch.uk

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