

# Dalton St Mary's CofE Primary School

Coronation Drive, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA15 8QR

**Inspection dates** 15–16 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The strong commitment of the staff to helping pupils learn has created a very positive ethos where pupils work hard.
- Achievement is good. Standards are rising and by the time they leave in Year 6 pupils are well prepared for secondary education.
- The majority of lessons are taught well. Pupils work hard because learning is made exciting.
- Effective support from additional adults helps to promote pupils' learning.
- Since the last inspection an effective whole-school system to keep track of each pupil's attainment and progress has been introduced.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are confident and willing to support each other. Pupils say they feel safe in school and the overwhelming majority of parents and staff think that bullying is very rare.
- School leaders have a clear vision for improvement and have impacted positively on the quality of teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders have worked successfully to tackle the slower progress in writing that was seen in 2012. Pupils now make good progress in writing and standards of writing are now higher than in the past.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and not enough is outstanding. This is more the case in mathematics lessons than in reading or writing lessons.
- When marking pupils' books, teachers do not always give pupils clear enough next steps in learning, or time to respond to their guidance.
- Leaders and managers have not used the school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching to effectively identify inconsistencies in the way mathematics is taught.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 12 lessons taught by seven teachers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff, pupils, members of the Governing Body and the school's adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They examined the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety and behaviour logs, school policies and a wide range of pupils' work.
- The inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- The inspectors also examined questionnaire responses from 22 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Dalton St Mary's CE Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- All pupils are taught in single-age classes, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are taught separately in Nursery and Reception classes.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or outstanding by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can produce and achieve in mathematics, especially when pupils are working independently
  - improving the use of time in lessons to ensure that all pupils are always challenged in their learning, particularly those of higher ability
  - ensuring that all pupils are provided with clear guidance as to how to improve their work and are given time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Ensure that the school's leaders and managers use the systems and processes that are in place to robustly tackle any inconsistencies in the way mathematics is taught.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding which are a little below average overall, but often low in the early skills for reading, writing and mathematics. Children's personal and emotional development is strongly promoted in all activities and, as a result, they make rapid progress and are happy, active and engrossed learners. By the time they begin Key Stage 1 the large majority know the school routines really well and are achieving in line with national expectations.
- Over the past three years the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 has been lower than would be expected nationally, but this is swiftly improving and the school records together with inspection evidence indicate that it is now broadly average.
- By the time they leave the school in Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average although this has fluctuated over time. As a result of improved teaching, including some very imaginative links between curriculum subject areas, pupils are now making better progress, particularly in writing. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils in Year 5 effectively combined new skills of how to write a diary extract with their science work about the functions of the heart.
- Pupils in Year 3 demonstrated good mathematical understanding when challenged with a problem related to sorting characters from a novel they had been reading. However, pupils' achievement in mathematics is inconsistent across the school and in some classes too little work is completed, particularly when pupils are working on their own.
- Pupils' performance in the 2012 Key Stage 1 phonics (linking sounds and letters) screening check was broadly in line with other schools nationally. Current information indicates that pupils in Year 1 now have a better level of phonics knowledge and have made very good progress from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The standard of reading in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 now is above average as a result of a stronger focus on the development of reading across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well from their individual starting points. The personalised support and care programmes are thoughtfully designed and effectively implemented in order to enhance these pupils' well-being as well as their learning.
- Effective use has been made of the school's pupil premium funding. This results in targeted pupils receiving good quality specific support. In national tests in 2012, the attainment in English and mathematics of the small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding was approximately a year behind all other pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that this gap is closing swiftly and the good progress made by these pupils means that their attainment is now much closer to that of other pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good, with some being outstanding, although there are some minor inconsistencies in the way mathematics is taught. Pupils behave well in all lessons, have very good attitudes to learning and, as a result, achieve well.
- Teachers provide pupils with effective opportunities to work in pairs or in groups, sharing their learning and developing their communication skills. Where teaching is best, the time available during lessons is used very well and pupils work hard on activities that meet their needs. Occasionally, where the work set is not hard enough, particularly for the more-able pupils, they make less progress.
- Teaching engages and motivates pupils because most teachers and support staff make the learning exciting through incorporating games and the use of information and communication technology into lessons.
- Support staff are used well to support pupils' learning. Their teaching is invariably good and particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. As a consequence,

those pupils who find learning more difficult and those with special educational needs make good progress.

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can learn in lessons that focus on developing reading and writing have risen. Therefore, the rate of pupils' progress has improved. In mathematics lessons teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough. This results in not enough work being produced by a minority of pupils and slower progress being made in some classes.
- Teaching promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, displays around the school which stimulate interest and inspire pupils to learn also show how different aspects of the curriculum are linked together. All classrooms have learning displays that support the development of key vocabulary and numeracy skills.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and assessments are accurate. While the majority of work is corrected, often giving pupils praise and a comment, the advice given is not always precise enough to show pupils the next steps in their learning. Additionally, pupils are not typically given the opportunity to respond to their teachers' written comments. This is a key reason why the impact of teaching on pupil achievement is not yet outstanding.

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

- There is a calm, orderly atmosphere around the school. Pupils express confidence that there is always an adult they can go to if they are worried about something. Pupils and their parents correctly report that behaviour is good and that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including the use of the internet, and their views can be summed up by one pupil who commented that 'Bullying happens at some schools – but not ours'.
- From a young age, pupils quickly develop the capacity to work well with each other which enhances their group work. They develop confidence in testing out their ideas and helping to refine their own and other pupils' work.
- In most lessons pupils make good progress because they are interested in learning and behave extremely well. They are mostly confident learners who work well together. In lessons where this is not always the case pupils may become distracted when the teacher spends too long introducing the lesson or activity, particularly more-able pupils.
- Attendance has been broadly average over time and the school has effective systems in place for ensuring that parents of pupils who are absent are contacted and the importance of regular attendance explained. This is particularly the case with families who wish to take holiday leave of absence during term time. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- The strong commitment to the safeguarding of pupils means that they and their parents are totally confident that pupils are well looked after. Pupils look out for each other around school and are aware of how to protect themselves from harm, including when using the internet.

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

- Leaders and managers have high expectations for the school's performance. The headteacher is a strong and supportive leader who is able to get the best from her staff. Teamwork among staff is good and teaching is improving overall.
- There is a strong commitment from leaders to ensuring that all pupils make the best progress possible. Although systems and processes are in place to monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching, these are not always used effectively enough to tackle any inconsistencies and to improve teachers' performance. Consequently, aspects of teaching, particularly those related to the teaching of mathematics, are not as effective as they could be in accelerating pupil progress. This is related to the use of performance management systems, which, although in place, need to be sharpened up in order to really impact on improving teaching.
- The coordination of special educational needs is very effective, resulting in good provision. Planning meets the needs of these pupils individually and a close check is kept on their progress.

Support staff are used carefully in order to maximise pupils' progress.

- School leaders promote equal opportunities and positive relationships effectively. This ensures that there is no discrimination through gender, ethnic heritage, disability or special educational needs.
- The local authority checks the school's self-evaluation judgements and documentation and has confidence in its accuracy. As the local authority judges the school to be doing well, it has provided only light-touch support.
- Safeguarding arrangements comply with regulations. Leaders and managers ensure that all staff recruited are checked for their suitability to work with children. They identify and respond well to concerns regarding children's welfare.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It generally ensures that pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and as a result behaviour in lessons is good. The curriculum makes interesting links between subjects and pupils enjoy their work, saying that they like the way that teachers help them to learn about different things at the same time.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including educational visits and visitors. The exciting curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs, a fact that they appreciate. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 said that they really enjoy the music tuition.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body provide good support for the school and understand what needs to be done to improve further. This support is balanced with a degree of challenge, resulting in pupils' achievements being discussed at meetings of the full governing body and at meetings of some of its committees. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and how it impacts on pupils' achievements. They are able to discuss the quality of teaching and have an understanding of the systems that are in place to check the performance of teachers against the national standards and their related salary progression. Safeguarding is given high priority by governors. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements and are effective, and that school policies are reviewed on a regular basis.

## 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>	112412
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	413077

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev A Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Woodburn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 462729
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