

Stainton CofE Primary School

Stainton, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0ET

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards by Year 6 are above average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. The most able pupils do well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make especially good progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit make good progress.
- Teaching is good. Classrooms are lively and productive and pupils' work and efforts are valued. Work is carefully planned to help pupils do their best. Leaders and staff ensure that the school is a welcoming place where children are happy and ready to learn.
- Pupils enjoy school and learning. They behave well in lessons and they feel safe and secure.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Assemblies are meaningful to pupils. Pupils are kind, sensitive and considerate to others.
- The headteacher, leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. Pupils' good achievement and effective teaching have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Leaders recognise what needs to be improved and take swift and effective action.
- Leaders have done all that they reasonably can do to alleviate the effects on pupils' progress of recent unavoidable staffing difficulties.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Marking does not always make it clear to pupils what they should do next to improve.
- When checking on teaching and pupils' work leaders do not look closely enough at how teaching is affecting pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not identify clear enough milestones to help check on the progress of pupils who are expected to do much better than that usually expected.
- The school has not yet found ways to allay the concerns of a small number of parents with regard to their children's progress and staff absence.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons. Two of these were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors analysed pupils' work in their books during visits to classrooms. Inspectors carried out a further scrutiny of pupils' workbooks; some books were looked at jointly with the headteacher.
- An inspector listened to children read from Year 2.
- Discussions were held with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the school's summary of its view of its own performance, improvement plans, information on pupils' progress, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding and governing body minutes.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 41 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors held conversations with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of a survey of parents carried out by the school in 2013. The lead inspector received three letters and an email communication from parents. Questionnaires completed by 15 staff were considered.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Frank Cain

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- A well-below average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There has been a change in the Chair of the Governing Body since the previous inspection.
- There has been recent unavoidable disruption to staffing for some year groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress further, especially in writing, by:
 - giving pupils clearer guidance on how to improve their work
 - making sure that pupils have the opportunity to act on the advice given.
- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - looking more closely at how teaching makes a difference to pupils' progress when making checks on pupils' work in books and in lessons
 - improving the systems for checking on pupils' progress by setting clearer milestones for those with the potential to make much better progress than that usually expected
 - finding ways to improve communications with parents in order to allay any concerns they have, particularly with regard to their children's progress and staff absence.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typical for their age. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They develop secure early reading, writing and mathematical skills; a three-year-old child in the Nursery wrote 'To mummy ... love' when making cards for Mothers' Day. Pupils learn to talk clearly to each other and adults and develop as confident individuals. In a Nursery session, children organised each other, and the inspector, when making a sun-like shape from large plastic pieces. One child confidently instructed others in finding different shapes to make each part of the 'sun'.
- Children joining the school in the Reception Year settle in well and catch up quickly to others. By the end of Reception the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is higher than the national average in all areas of learning.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Results in the national tests of early reading skills are above average. Results of national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 are usually above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 standards are typically well above average in reading and mathematics. Pupils achieved above national average results in spelling, punctuation and grammar tests in 2013. Standards in writing are a little better than average; progress has not been as rapid as in reading and mathematics.
- The school recognised this and has taken effective steps to speed up pupils' progress. As a result, standards are rising quickly. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are on track to reach above average standards in their writing. Years 3 and 4 produce good quality writing such as well-structured and sensitive poetry, and reports on facts about the Galapagos Islands. Year 1 pupils write carefully recalled stories about the 'Three Little Pigs' and the story of Joseph and the amazing coat of many colours, and a report on a hunt for a missing creature. The additional work on spelling and grammar for Key Stage 2 pupils is helping pupils to improve.
- Most pupils develop a good style to their handwriting from an early age. Pupils take pride in presenting their work carefully.
- The most able pupils make good progress and the proportion reaching above average standards is better than the national average, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The pupil premium is used well to support individual pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Staff recognise pupils' individual needs quickly and make sure they get the right support that helps them to achieve well.
- The school looks carefully at the progress of every individual, making sure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed. Where pupils start to slip behind, actions are taken to help them catch up.
- Recent unavoidable staffing issues have led to a temporary slowing of progress for some pupils in Years 2 and 3. Leaders have been quick to adjust staffing arrangements and progress is accelerating quickly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are happy and settled in classrooms and ready to learn because staff have positive relationships with pupils and high expectations of their behaviour and effort.
- A highly consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and rewarding effort and learning across all classes helps pupils to feel secure and know what is expected of them, so that they try hard to do their best.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged, through imaginative play and well-

structured activities led by adults, to try things out for themselves, to improve their writing skills, experiment with numbers and learn how letters and sounds are matched. Their confidence as individual personalities is encouraged and they learn to get on well with each other and adults.

- Pupils across the school enjoy reading because well-chosen books and reading materials excite and interest them. Early reading skills are skilfully taught so that pupils very quickly learn to read. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are benefiting from being taught a carefully planned programme that increases their understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Progress in writing is speeding up quickly because lessons are carefully structured to help pupils build up their writing skills. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils spent considerable time acting out and talking through the story of *'The Tiger Who Came To Tea'*. Consequently, they had a good range of vocabulary and rehearsed sentences to draw on before they rewrote the story. Pupils improved their technical accuracy because it was constantly checked in the lessons and individuals were reminded of what they needed to do to improve.
- In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were challenged to write a journalistic account of an event in Tudor times relating to treason. Pupils were keen to write about these events because they had studied them as part of their history work. They were aware of how to make the events appear sensational and appealing to readers because of the analysis they had undertaken of how to capture an audience's interest.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. This is because they are encouraged to use a good range of practical equipment to help them to understand and they are encouraged to apply what they know to solving problems. Pupils in Years 2 and 3, for example, worked extremely hard to work out how to share sweets in different ways. The real sweets and the very effective support of an adult volunteer helped these pupils to achieve well.
- Gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are addressed because staff look carefully at their progress and plan learning that makes sure that gaps are closed. For example, a mathematics lesson on the link between percentages, fractions and decimals was planned as a result of close analysis of pupils' progress and helped to clarify their thinking.
- The most able pupils are given work that extends their thinking, especially in mathematics and writing. Additional sessions are organised that help these pupils to reach high standards.
- Pupils benefit from discussing their work with each other. As a result, they develop confidence in their ability to communicate and this prepares them well for their futures.
- A good range of modern technology helps pupils to learn. For example, a computer program to encourage pupils' mental agility in mathematics is proving popular among pupils and supporting their progress well.
- Extra adult support helps pupils of all abilities to maximise their progress. Teaching assistants are skilled in improving pupils' progress. They work effectively with pupils from across the range of abilities, helping to fill any identified gaps in their knowledge.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. However, it does not always make it clear to pupils what they need to do next to improve. In addition, pupils are not given the chance to respond to the advice given.
- Pupils are required to carry out reading, spelling and numeracy tasks at home on a regular basis. The school has held activities for parents, particularly of younger pupils, to support parents in understanding how best to guide their children's learning when at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve well. Pupils are keen to learn. They are diligent and hard working in lessons. They present their work carefully.
- Pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups, and sharing their ideas. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils worked together cooperatively to work out which different prefixes and suffixes they could use to change words.
- Pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. They want to do their best and this can be seen in

their enthusiastic and good quality of singing in assemblies.

- Pupils behave well in lessons and in all their activities out and about in the school. Staff are highly consistent in the way they encourage and reward good behaviour. At lunchtimes, older pupils sit with younger pupils and enjoy taking care of them. Playtimes and lunchtimes in the dining area are sociable occasions.
- There have been no pupils excluded from the school since the previous inspection. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying. They know about different types of bullying. They are happy that any problems they have, such as falling out with friends, are sorted out by the staff quickly.
- Rates of attendance are above average and improving.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe including when using modern technology. Staff are fully aware of procedures in relation to child protection.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, leaders and governors are determined to improve the school further. They have ensured that pupils' achievement and teaching have been typically good since the previous inspection, including through a recent period of unavoidable disruption to staffing.
- Alongside the focus on improving pupils' academic achievement, leaders do not lose sight of the need to ensure that pupils are safe, happy and secure in school.
- Leaders know how well the school is performing and identify the right priorities for improvement. They keep a close track of every pupil's progress over time. The systems they use do not easily show whether pupils with the potential to make much better progress than usually expected do so. This information is needed to be sure that the school is comparing favourably with the national figures and to ensure that every pupil achieves their very best.
- Leaders, including some middle leaders, carry out frequent checks on the quality of teaching; observing teaching in lessons and through looking at pupils' work in books. However, within these activities there has been too much emphasis on evaluating teaching input without looking closely enough at what effect it has on pupils' learning and progress over time.
- Effective staff training is linked closely to the school's priorities. Middle leaders are increasingly active in leading training within the school. For example, there is now a better focus on improving pupils' spelling, grammar, reading and writing skills in Key Stage 2.
- Staff performance is managed tightly so that individual staff targets reflect school priorities and are focused on raising standards; in pupils' writing, for example.
- The majority of parents appreciate how well the school supports their children. Recently, a small number of parents have had concerns about the progress of their children and staff absence. The school has not yet found ways of allaying all of these parents' concerns.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Pupils enjoy learning because the topics and books they study are interesting and exciting. Learning in reading, writing and mathematics is planned well both as separate subjects and when learning in other subjects across the curriculum. The excellent spread of extra-curricular activities helps pupils to make the most of school life and develop a wide range of interests.
- Sports funding has been used effectively to provide additional competitive and sporting activities so that a broader range of pupils are benefiting from increased physical activity.
- The local authority provides very 'light touch' support to the school because it is seen as a successful school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders. They bring a good range of skills to their role. They have undertaken an audit of their skills and are planning further training to further support some governors. A good range of

training, including in safeguarding, has already been undertaken by key governors.

- Governors know how well pupils are performing in relation to national figures and are aware that achievement in writing continues to be a priority.
- They are aware of the quality of teaching across the school and support decisions on staff salary progression based on effective performance against challenging targets. They ensure that the headteacher has challenging targets to work towards.
- Governors have supported the school in managing effectively recent unavoidable and difficult staffing disruptions.
- Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is allocated and are satisfied that it is effective. They are not fully up to date on how the sports funding has been spent and what impact it is having.

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	112307
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	431388

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenis Price
Headteacher	Helen Dunham
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
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