

Newtown Community Primary School

Newtown Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7LW

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher have successfully improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement to a good standard.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. From a low starting point they reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good. Activities are mostly well-planned and capture pupils' imagination.
- Early reading skills are taught outstandingly well.
- Pupils behave well and any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with firmly. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and attendance has improved greatly over the last three years. It is now above average.
- Leaders are providing staff with the training they need to improve their teaching and raise pupils' achievements even further.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school and not only support it, but also provide a considerable level of challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not of the highest quality to ensure that pupils make rapid progress.
- Occasionally, some pupils find the work they are asked to do too hard, so their progress slows.
- Marking in subjects other than English is not always effective.
- Not enough attention is given to making sure pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work are of a good quality.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 teaching sessions. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms, looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with several groups of pupils, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- No information was available concerning parents' responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View). However, the results from the school's own consultations with parents were considered and inspectors spoke to several parents.
- The responses from staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding and additional sport funding as well as documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Pringle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs for eight pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties.
- A very small number of pupils attend a pupil referral unit (PRU) for half a day per week.
- The proportion of pupils who receive the pupil premium funding is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The large majority of pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The small size of the school means that no reference can be made to whether or not the school meets the government's current floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that pupils make outstanding progress by ensuring that:
 - the work pupils are asked to do is always challenging, but not beyond what they are capable of doing
 - marking in all subjects, not just English, helps pupils to know what to do to improve
 - pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work match the good content of their writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils now make good progress, which is a very positive improvement since the previous inspection. This is a direct result of the actions taken by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Current school data and inspection evidence show an upward trend in pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to exceed last year's results in mathematics, reading and writing, with attainment in line with that expected nationally.
- The stage of development of children starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well below that usually typical for their age. Children enjoy school and are keen to learn new skills. For example, investigative skills are developed well by children finding out the different sounds produced by using drum sticks to drum on a range of different objects. They confidently use their skills in linking letters and the sounds they make in reading words.
- By the time children enter Year 1 their levels of skill are just below those typical, despite good progress.
- The outstanding focus the school has had on improving the reading of young pupils has been effective. The number of pupils reaching the average standard in the Year 1 phonics check (early reading skills - the sounds that letters make) is above average. Older pupils say they get plenty of chances to read and find reading enjoyable.
- Pupils use their writing and mathematical skills well in other subjects. However, the quality of their work at times suffers by handwriting not being of a good quality and work not presented well.
- The most-able pupils benefit from an increasing level of challenge as they move through the school and make good progress. For example, older pupils worked closely together in using percentages in mathematics to work out accurately the actual price of items after discounts have been applied.
- Disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs, including those who are in the resource class and those who attend the PRU make the same good progress as their classmates because the support they receive is well-matched to their needs.
- Good quality information is given to the PRU about how well the pupils who attend are doing. The school's good links with the PRU enable them to know that the pupils continue to make good progress when off site attending the PRU.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress. At the end of Year 6 their attainment is in line with that found nationally. There is no gap between what they achieve and what other pupils in the school achieve in English, and in mathematics it has narrowed to be just over half a year behind their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has become consistently good this year, with examples of outstanding teaching. Achievement is rising as a result. A key factor in this improvement has been the support given to staff by the headteacher, including plenty of opportunities for professional development.
- Teachers, including those who work with pupils in the resource class, manage pupils very well. They establish clear routines and high expectations of behaviour and hard work. Pupils respond well and are keen to carry on learning and finish off their work. For example, younger Key Stage 2 pupils were desperate to complete the letters they had written to their parents, inviting them to come to school to look at the work they had done. One child's letter included the comment, 'If you come you might even be given warm crumpets!'
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with children engaged enthusiastically in a variety of activities. One child's description of a piece of fruit, 'The apple is red, it feels soft', demonstrates clearly the emphasis given to promoting children's writing skills. However, at times

not enough is done to promote the correct formation of letters.

- A key strength in teaching across the school is the use of assessment information to set different levels of challenge for pupils. This often results in good and at times rapid progress. Pupils are keen to show what they can do and they try hard. For example, older pupils are keen to produce a synopsis to be included in the programme for the school's production of the 'Wizard of Oz'.
- Occasionally, the work some pupils are asked to do is not matched well to their needs and this slows the progress they make.
- Teachers make good use of teaching assistants to provide support for pupils. This is particularly effective in helping pupils with special educational needs, including those in the specially resourced provision to cope with tasks, and in challenging them to concentrate and do the best they can.
- There are many examples of comments in teachers' marking which provide very clear guidance on how pupils should improve their work in English. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect and respond to the advice given. However, marking in other subjects is not as effective and not enough attention is given in making sure pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work are of a good standard.
- Pupils and those parents spoken to during the inspection are pleased with the good quality of teaching in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection show that behaviour over time is good. Isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with very well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do their very best. The school's production of 'The Wizard of Oz' was a pleasure to observe, with pupils performing confidently and competently and being proud in what they were doing.
- Attendance has risen recently to above average.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are enjoyable occasions. Pupils are mindful of each other and show a respect for adults. They understand and respect other's different circumstances.
- Pupils contribute well to the everyday life of the school. The school council and playground friends are proud of what they do.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and how hurtful name-calling can be. They are confident that any incidents would be dealt with swiftly, should they occur.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are very confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school.
- The school ensures that pupils who attend the PRU are safe and it is kept informed about how well pupils behave there and about the overall quality of supervision. It monitors pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour well.
- There are many opportunities provided to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils raise money to help others. The importance of caring for others can be seen in one very young pupil's comment when she saw an insect land on her teacher's dress, 'I hope it has not hurt you'.
- Parents spoken to and the results of the school's own survey show they are pleased with the standard of pupils' behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The outstanding leadership of teaching and learning by the headteacher has been central to the school's work and brought about changes for the better since the previous inspection.
- The vision for the school's progress, that only the best will do, is fully shared by staff and governors. All work with determination to fulfil the ambition they share for every pupil.
- Robust checking of the school's work has provided an accurate picture of what is going well and what still needs to be done. Leaders know the importance of improving teaching further in order to raise achievement to outstanding.
- Middle leaders are effective in carrying out their responsibilities. However, some leaders are fairly new to their responsibilities and the full impact of their actions has yet to be seen.
- The specially resourced provision is led and managed very well, so the pupils who attend do well.
- A well-planned programme of staff training is firmly in place. Checks on teaching and of the performance of teachers are of a good quality and have led to staff changes. Staff pay awards and their targets are closely linked to pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well, with provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development playing an important part. Very good headway is being made in preparing for the introduction of a new curriculum (subjects and activities taught) in September 2014.
- The school closely analyses the use of pupil premium funding. It has closed the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and their peers in English and has narrowed it significantly in mathematics.
- Leaders' success in ensuring equal opportunities for all is reflected in the good progress made by all groups, including pupils in the resource base, and in the way that every opportunity is taken to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met and that the building and school grounds provide a safe environment.
- Sport funding is used well. There is a good level of participation in physical education. These include out-of-school sporting activities competing with other schools. Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles; they understand the importance of being as healthy as possible.
- The school provides the PRU with the information it needs, including pupils' very specific needs to make sure its pupils who attend have their needs met.
- The local authority has provided effective support. It is confident that school leaders are very capable of bringing about further improvement to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well led by a highly experienced chairperson. There is a good range of experience and expertise within the governing body, with its members actively involved in attending training to extend their skills further. Governors are not afraid to ask challenging questions about what is happening in school. They provide strong support to the school. Governors have a clear knowledge of the reason why the previous inspection found the school to be in need of improvement and have done much in helping to make sure that this is no longer the case. They understand how the school makes decisions about targets for teachers to improve their performance and the possible impact of this on teachers' pay. Governors make sure that the school's finances are used well. They ensure that the pupil premium and primary sport funds are used to close any gaps in pupils' achievement and to provide sporting activities for all pupils. Governors carry out their statutory duties well, and make sure they meet all legal requirements with regard to keeping everyone safe.

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	112218
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	442364

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Jordan
Headteacher	Fiona Manuel
Date of previous school inspection	19 February 2013
Telephone number	01228 409650
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