

# Dent CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Laning, Dent, Sedbergh, LA10 5QJ

**Inspection dates** 24–25 September 2014

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Early years provision          |                      | Good        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- From broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress and reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Good teaching and plenty of encouragement from adults mean that pupils are inspired to do their best.
- Some teaching and progress in Key Stage 2 is particularly strong.
- The most able pupils reach high standards.
- Pupils display sensible and thoughtful attitudes to their learning and each other. They are helpful, hardworking and polite.
- Good behaviour is noticed and rewarded, and poor behaviour is rare. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong; they report that bullying does not happen and say they feel safe in school.
- The school offers many after-school clubs and extra events that enrich pupils' learning and school life.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities are given plenty of opportunities to try new things and experience success. Consequently, they enjoy school, feel confident, and are well prepared for their new schools when they leave Dent Primary.
- The quality of some of the artwork is excellent and there are many sports activities and tournaments with other schools.
- The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction. Her purposeful enthusiasm and ambition set high standards for staff and pupils. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils has increased and standards have risen.
- School leaders make sensible decisions based on their knowledge of teaching and learning. They always act in the best interests of the pupils.
- Parents and members of the local community hold the school in high regard.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While the overall quality of teaching is good, some teaching is not pitched at the right level for some pupils' learning needs.
- The well-intentioned governing body does not yet provide sufficient challenge and support to the school leadership. Consequently, they rely on the headteacher for a lot of information that they could find out for themselves.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher, and also made several short visits to other lessons. The inspector also observed an assembly, visited the school's breakfast club and two of the after-school clubs, and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and break times, and during a class visit to Dent village.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders and governors. A telephone conversation with a local authority officer also took place.
- By the end of the inspection, there were seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), which is too few to generate a report. The inspector looked at the results of the school's own survey of parents' views, talked to a few parents at school, and considered the responses to the school staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans, and information about the work of the governing body. The work in pupils' books and on display, records relating to the quality of teaching, staff performance management, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

### Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Dent CofE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All the pupils are White British.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes: Reception children and Key Stage 1 pupils in one class, and Key Stage 2 pupils in the other class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is well-below average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a number of after-school clubs.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils make even better progress and reach even higher standards, by making sure that:
  - new learning always builds carefully on what pupils already know and can do
  - if pupils make mistakes, then these are noticed by staff and used to plan activities that help them to improve their understanding and learn more
  - teachers and teaching assistants always offer pupils clear explanations so that pupils always understand what they need to do.
- Strengthen the leadership and management provided by the governing body by making sure governors:
  - increase their involvement in gathering and analysing information about the school's performance so they are not so reliant on information provided by the headteacher
  - do more to help share the leadership workload.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a very effective leader who sets high standards. Under her leadership academic standards have risen, the range of activities on offer has increased, and the school has forged productive partnerships with other schools. She steers Dent Primary School with purposeful enthusiasm and direction.
- The headteacher watches staff at work and then gives them advice about their teaching. Regular training and checks on pupils' progress keep everyone informed about expectations and ensure that the school continues to improve.
- In this small school, everyone has to take on some leadership responsibility and staff manage their roles efficiently. In order to provide additional support and guidance, the school links up with leaders from other schools to share ideas and expertise and to check that expectations are high enough. In addition, visiting specialists, in special educational needs for example, provide additional skills and leadership.
- School leaders are committed to providing a curriculum that requires pupils to make links between subjects and see the relevance to their lives; both now and in the future. A recent project about 'global learning' prompted pupils to ask and explore thought-provoking questions about equality, fairness, democracy and respect. Through this work, pupils not only furthered their learning in different subjects but also reflected upon their understanding of right and wrong and how they can help others.
- Through other projects, in subjects such as art or history, pupils are helped to develop empathy and an awareness of how different people's lives, values and beliefs are shaped. The positive outcomes of the school's approach to learning in different subjects are evident in the standard of work around the school and in the pupils' attitudes to their work and each other.
- Even before the primary school sport funding arrived, the school was offering a lot of sport and physical education. Since receiving this extra funding, the number of activities has increased further and participation rates have risen. Pupils regularly visit different venues to take part in team games and competitions with other schools.
- After-school clubs operate daily and offer a range of sports and other worthwhile activities that encourage pupils of all ages to try new things and get involved in local events.
- Parents, and members of the local community, are kept informed about school activities through a detailed newsletter and a simple website. Feedback gathered from a recent school survey of parents' views indicates a high level of satisfaction with the school's work and parents spoken to during the inspection were all very pleased with their children's progress at school.
- The local authority provides a low level of support as it has confidence in the school leadership to maintain, and build upon, the current good standards.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors want the best for their school; they value the work of the headteacher and staff and are proud of the school's achievements. They are approachable and positive ambassadors for Dent Primary School.
  - Governors know about academic standards and the quality of teaching. They use this information to maintain an oversight of the staff performance management procedures and pay.
  - Governors attend training events and present themselves as articulate and capable. Nevertheless, in some key areas of their work they rely heavily on the headteacher to collect and analyse information. While they do get the information they need, they are not developing their own analytical skills or understanding of school development planning, and are not doing enough to share the leadership workload.
  - Financial management is efficient. Governors know how specific funds, such as pupil premium or the primary school sport grant, are used and the benefits that these bring to the pupils.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In all situations they are sensible, polite and helpful. The older pupils readily help the younger ones, and pupils of all ages say they feel happy and safe at school.
- Attendance rates are above average. Pupils arrive on time and are properly prepared for school. Records show that there have been no exclusions for several years.
- Pupils' good, and often excellent, conduct is evident throughout the school day and particularly so at

lunchtimes when they all dine together in the school hall. Polite conversation, good table manners and patient respect for the school's routines make the daily lunchtime a calm and relaxed social occasion for all.

- In lessons, pupils are usually attentive and can be trusted to get on with their work without fuss; and they do. These positive attitudes serve them well and, in most situations, help them to succeed, although sometimes they will keep trying to complete work even when they are not sure about what they need to do; remaining quiet rather than asking for help.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Regular training keeps staff and pupils properly informed about safety matters and some aspects of the school's work to teach the pupils about safety and staying safe is excellent. As part of a personal development programme, for example, all the Key Stage 2 pupils received first-aid training.
- Levels of supervision at different times of the school day, and during breakfast and after-school clubs, are adequate. All are aware of the school rules and routines that help to keep everyone safe, although very recently appointed members of staff are still learning some of the procedures.
- Pupils cannot recall any incidents of bullying in recent times; they understand what it is and the different forms it can take. They are confident that every pupil at Dent Primary is treated with friendly respect and that adults will always help them if they have a problem.
- The attention to pupils' well-being and the level of pastoral care is second to none. The school calls upon the services of a range of experts to support pupils with particular needs, and communication between school and home is excellent.
- There are many different rewards and incentives that serve to recognise pupils' contributions to school life. An annual tradition that requires the Year 6 leavers to create a lasting gift for the school, and organise and lead a presentation ceremony, is just one example of how pupils are encouraged to exercise initiative and take responsibility.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Good teaching, coupled with teachers' informed awareness of pupils' particular needs and interests, means that pupils in both classes make good progress at school.
- Pupils take pride in their work, set it out carefully in their books, and usually follow up teachers' comments and advice about how to improve or refine it further. Marking of pupils' writing is particularly effective and pupils are encouraged to review and refine their own work and offer constructive advice to others.
- Detailed records of pupils' progress help teachers to pitch their teaching at the right level for the many different levels of understanding and ability that are present in the mixed-age classes. Observations in classrooms and work in books show that, in the main, teachers get the level of challenge right; but not always. On occasions, pupils find it hard to follow some explanations and become unsure about what they need to do, or they make mistakes that are not picked up quickly by staff.
- Teaching and learning is not just confined to the classroom. Teachers regularly take the pupils out and about in order to feed their curiosity and generate ideas. During this inspection, for example, some of the younger pupils visited the village in order to help them with some descriptive writing. Pupils report that they enjoy learning outdoors, often using local or more distant environments to help them think and learn new skills.
- Homework is an established routine in several subjects and also incorporates online learning that the pupils can access from school and home. Pupils understand the school's expectations and, while their enthusiasm for homework is variable, staff, pupils and parents all report that it is usually completed and handed in on time.
- Teaching assistants play a key role at Dent Primary and some of their work with individual pupils, or in small group teaching situations, is highly effective. In addition, their help with extra-curricular activities means that this small school is able to offer many additional learning opportunities after normal school hours.
- Specialist teaching in art and sport is of a high quality and leads to some excellent achievements.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- Since the previous inspection, standards have risen steadily, and in 2013 and 2014, the Year 6 pupils reached above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They left Dent Primary very well prepared for their learning at secondary school.
- Children start school with levels of skill and knowledge that can vary considerably from year to year but, over time, are generally in line with those typical for their age. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are already working at above-average standards and this is because of the good teaching they receive during their time in Years 1 and 2.
- This good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and some of the pupils who left at end of Year 6 in 2014 made exceptional academic progress and reached very high standards in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are also doing well, although school records indicate that progress is faster in upper Key Stage 2 than it is in the lower year groups.
- Reading and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are given careful attention. From the broadly average standards seen in Year 1, pupils go on to read with confidence, fluency and enjoyment so that, by the time they leave primary school, they are capable readers.
- Most of the time, the most able pupils are challenged to think hard in lessons and they demonstrate a maturity that helps them to make the most of their learning opportunities. The standards seen in some of their written work, and their understanding of some quite complex texts and mathematical concepts, are impressive. The very high standards reached by some of the Year 6 pupils who left in 2014 are indicative of the school's success at meeting the learning needs of the brightest pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given the help they need. A specialist teacher regularly visits Dent Primary to assist the school's work with pupils who need extra help with their learning and to provide training and support for staff. In addition, bespoke support for pupils with specific difficulties means they grow in confidence and are able to do their best.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils at the school for an analysis of their progress and attainment data to generate meaningful statistics. However, a study of the school's test results, assessment data and pupils' work confirm that all pupils are making at least good progress; no pupils at Dent Primary are falling behind others in the school or pupils nationally. Some pupils, particularly the brightest pupils in upper Key Stage 2, are making great gains in their learning across several different subjects.
- The school's commitment to offering a wide range of activities and recognising each pupil's individual talents and interests means that all pupils experience success and their achievements are recognised and celebrated. All have equal opportunity to benefit from all the school does; no-one is left out.
- Achievements in art and school sport are particular strengths. Some of the artwork around the school is excellent and there is no doubt that this is the result of some expert teaching and highly creative work by staff and pupils. For such a small school, pupils enjoy many different sports and their efforts have met with some successes in local tournaments.

**The early years provision is good**

- Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the early years vary, sometimes significantly, from year to year but, over time, are generally in line with those typical for their age. As soon as they start school, children join a mixed-age class where they are taught alongside Key Stage 1 pupils. They settle in quickly because, they say, everyone is friendly and well behaved. Observations made during this inspection, and comments from parents, support this view.
- Most children make good progress and are well prepared for their start in Year 1. The mixed-age class arrangement means that the move from early years to Year 1 is very smooth and children's learning continues without any disruption.
- In order to support the youngest children's learning in a class of 4 to 7-year-olds, the school employs additional support staff. Their work is effective and good teamwork with the class teacher ensures that the children get the teaching, learning experiences and guidance they need.
- At the time of this inspection, the leadership of early years had recently changed. The previous leader left a very positive legacy and this has helped new staff to pick up the reigns without difficulty.
- In class, and outside, the children are given plenty of opportunity to explore, make decisions and do things for themselves. They appear relaxed and content; they chat happily with the adults and play safely alongside pupils of all ages.
- Adults in charge are properly trained and procedures for keeping children safe are in place.

## 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> | 112331  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cumbria |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 448421  |

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>                 | 4–11                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 33                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body        |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Kate Cairns               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Nicky Edwards             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 18 January 2010           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 015396 25259              |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 015396 25076              |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | admin@dent.cumbria.sch.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

