

Westfield Nursery and Primary School

Nilsson Drive, Workington, Cumbria CA14 5BD

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well in English and mathematics, especially in key stage 2. This is because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable.
- Leaders and governors have not monitored carefully enough the progress that pupils make. The least and most able pupils fail to make the progress they should in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching does not routinely provide the most able pupils with work that challenges them sufficiently, especially in key stage 2.
- Pupils' weak spelling skills, including those of most-able pupils, have a negative impact on the quality of their writing.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their important reading, writing and mathematics skills across a wide range of subjects. Subject leaders' understanding of progress in their subjects is at an early stage.
- Governors do not ask leaders enough challenging questions about their use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, they do not have a comprehensive understanding of its impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Despite leaders' hard work, poor attendance continues to have a negative impact on the progress some pupils make. Leaders and governors have been unable to convince some parents and carers of the links between success at school and good attendance habits.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision for pupils in the early years is good. Children learn and develop well, because of the good teaching they receive. They make strong progress from low starting points, and most reach a good level of development by the end of Reception class.
- Provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils learn about diversity within families and the wider world.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe from harm are effective. Staff are vigilant, and pupils say they feel safe in the school.
- Attainment in key stage 1 is improving steadily towards national averages in English and mathematics. The work of current pupils suggests that most are making progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors ask leaders more challenging questions about their use of the pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders and governors monitor more carefully the progress that pupils make over time, especially those pupils who are most- and least-able, and especially in reading and in mathematics
 - subject leaders develop a strong understanding of the progress that pupils make in their subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that it is consistently good or better, by making sure that:
 - teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in key stage 2, routinely provides work that challenges pupils sufficiently, particularly the most able, so that they make strong progress
 - teaching develops pupils' spelling skills effectively, to improve the quality of their writing
 - teaching enables pupils to develop their reading, writing, spelling and, where appropriate, their mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that:
 - the recent improvements to attendance are sustained and built upon further, so that attendance reaches at least the average for pupils nationally
 - those pupils who are absent persistently, and their parents and carers, fully understand the links between success at school and good attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- School leaders have not sustained the good quality of education since the last inspection. A period of considerable staffing turbulence has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching that pupils receive. Leaders and governors have not acted quickly enough to prevent the consequent decline in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, especially in key stage 2.
- Staffing is now more stable, and leaders have made important changes to the teaching of English and mathematics that are beginning to have an impact. However, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Older pupils are having to work very hard to close gaps in their learning resulting from historic weaker teaching, in order to make up for lost time.
- Leaders and governors have not monitored carefully enough the progress of particular groups of pupils. They have been too ready to see the gradual increase in the number of pupils reaching expected standards as evidence of improvement. In fact, pupils of lower and higher abilities do not consistently make the progress they should from their individual starting points. This is because the learning that teachers provide does not routinely challenge these pupils in ways that enable them to achieve well.
- Leaders and governors have welcomed the timely support offered by the local authority and are now taking the right actions to improve teaching. Work in the books of pupils currently in the school shows that most are making better progress. However, it is too early to see the impact of these actions on pupils' outcomes in the national tests at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders and governors have a strong understanding of the challenges that high levels of deprivation have brought to the community in which their pupils live. Leaders and governors share a passion for ensuring that the curriculum they provide enables all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to access an exciting programme of educational visits, experiences and residential stays. Displays around the school show that these visits enrich pupils' learning. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and improve their reading, writing and especially mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- School leaders are taking firm action to improve teaching. They have secured appropriate training and professional development for teachers in order to improve their subject knowledge, especially in writing and in mathematics. Teachers value the support that they receive from the English subject leader and the newly appointed mathematics subject leader. They say that this is helping them to plan more effectively for pupils' learning. However, there is still variability in the strength of teachers' subject knowledge, especially in mathematics. This sometimes slows the progress pupils make in lessons.
- Leaders of wider curriculum subjects value the opportunities that senior leaders provide for their professional development. They have a clear understanding of the coverage of their curriculum areas across the school. However, their understanding of the progress

that pupils make in their subjects over time is at an early stage, so senior leaders have not been able to evaluate fully their impact on pupils' outcomes.

- Leaders promote fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately through a range of activities, for example by arranging visits from speakers from a range of different faiths. Pupils from the school council value the opportunity to represent the views of their peers and understand that they are expected to lead by example.
- The school's good leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) means that these pupils are well supported and make strong progress from their individual starting points. Parents who spoke to inspectors or who replied to Ofsted's free-text service shared this view.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not hold leaders stringently enough to account for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. They do not ask enough challenging questions about leaders' use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, they do not have a clear idea of the impact of the funding on pupils' learning, or upon their readiness for the next stage in their education.
- Governors have sought the right training and advice to help them improve their work with the school. Difficulties in recruiting new members and a lack of appropriate administrative support have, however, slowed the speed with which governors have responded to this training. Information from their most recent meetings suggests that governors are now asking leaders more of the right kinds of questions, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that staff are well trained to recognise when pupils may be at risk of abuse or neglect. Staff are confident in their understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school. Those who spoke to inspectors were able to explain very well how to keep themselves safe online, for example when using social media. Pupils know whom to approach in the school if they need help or are worried.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable.
- Where learning is planned effectively, pupils settle to work quickly because they know what is expected of them. For example, in a phonics lesson in Year 1, pupils joined in with familiar actions to help them learn a new combination of letters or 'digraph'. They enjoyed demonstrating their new knowledge and congratulated each other when they 'got it right'. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils chatted quietly and purposefully about their work on division. They focused well on their learning and made progress, because their teacher had made sure they understood what they had to do.

- Where learning is not planned effectively, time is not used well. Some pupils, especially those who are most able, find the work too easy and finish quickly. These pupils have to wait for further instructions before they are able to move on, while pupils of lower ability sometimes struggle to understand. At times, pupils spend too long rehearsing the same procedure and learning does not move on quickly enough.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they use questioning effectively to find out more about what pupils have understood. They use this information to reshape tasks or refine explanations where necessary. This helps pupils to understand better and they make progress as a result.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is less well developed, however, especially in mathematics, their questions and explanations are less clear and sometimes misleading. This means that some pupils do not know how to answer and, as a result, opportunities to identify and remedy their misunderstandings are missed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have established strong relationships with pupils that have a positive impact on their attitudes to learning. Teachers and staff have a good understanding of the emotional needs of their pupils. This helps them to provide the right support, especially for those pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour well. Most pupils stay focused as a result. On the few occasions where low-level disruption does occur, it is because learning does not challenge pupils or engage their interests sufficiently.
- There is variability in the degree to which teaching enables pupils to deepen their understanding, or to learn from their mistakes. For example, during the inspection, pupils in key stage 1 made progress in their understanding about how ice melts by discovering that, when a container is insulated with cotton wool, the ice melts more slowly. However, in some lessons, especially in mathematics, pupils are asked to move on before they have fully understood their current work. When this happens, their knowledge is insecure and they struggle to explain what they have learned.
- Work in their writing books shows that teaching is enabling younger children to practise and apply their developing phonics skills well. For example, during the inspection, children in Year 1 wrote about the characters in the story 'The Three Bears'. They were able to write some words correctly and made good attempts at more complex words.
- Teaching, especially in key stage 2, does not routinely build upon pupils' existing strengths to enable them to develop good spelling skills. Even the most able pupils make too many mistakes. This impacts negatively on the quality of their work and on the progress they make in writing from their starting points.
- There is inconsistency in the extent to which pupils practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. In some English lessons, teachers make good use of pupils' experiences, for example on a school trip, to bring their writing or 'recounts' more to life. However, opportunities for pupils to use writing or mathematical skills in wider curriculum subjects are more limited. This reduces the extent to which pupils can practise and refine their skills, including in spelling.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and governors have successfully established an 'open culture' which promotes pupils' welfare effectively. Staff at all levels welcome the changes leaders have made to the way in which concerns and information are recorded. They say this helps them to be alert to the factors affecting individual pupils' well-being and readiness to learn, and to support them in the right way when necessary.
- Teachers and leaders challenge stereotyping and provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity around them. For example, pupils from early years to Year 6 learned more about the range of skills needed to play wheelchair basketball by taking part themselves. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were able to explain confidently about diversity within families, including where parents are of the same gender.
- Teachers and leaders work effectively with a range of agencies, including the local authority, in order to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Where referrals to other services are necessary, they are made in a timely manner. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are carried out and recorded effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Too many pupils are absent from school persistently. The proportion of pupils who miss school for at least 10% of the year is much higher than the average nationally. This has a negative impact on the progress they make and on their readiness for the next stage in their education.
- School leaders, including the school's access and inclusion officer, have worked tirelessly to improve pupils' attendance at school. Their efforts are at last beginning to have an impact. The school's information shows that overall attendance is now rising towards national averages and is better than at the same time last year. More pupils than at the same time last year have attended school every day. However, despite their best efforts, leaders have not succeeded in persuading some persistently absent pupils and their parents and carers of the strong links between regular attendance and success at school.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They show politeness to visitors and move between lessons and playtimes in an orderly manner.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons. On the few occasions where they are less engaged in their learning, it is because the work that teachers provide is not sufficiently challenging or interesting. Pupils who spoke to inspectors say that bullying does not happen often, but that, when it does, they know that they can rely on their teachers to sort it out.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils' attainment in national tests and their progress in reading, writing and mathematics had declined. However, inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in the school, especially in key stage 1, are now making better progress as a result of improved teaching. Pupils' achievement in key stage 2 is also improving slowly but is not yet close enough to national averages.
- The proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the Year 6 national tests has risen over the last three years, from 13% in 2016 to 44% in 2018. However, this is still well below the average for pupils nationally.
- In 2018, pupils made progress that was well below average in reading and in mathematics. This represented a decline from the slightly improved outcomes in 2017. Pupils made progress in writing in 2018 which was below average but which was slightly improved on 2017.
- Work in current pupils' books, classroom observations and information from the school's assessments suggest that they are generally making better progress than those in the same year groups at this time last year, especially in Year 6. This is the result of improvements that leaders have made to teachers' subject knowledge. However, there is still variability in progress across classes in key stage 2, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the most able pupils in Year 6 made progress that was weaker than expected. Work in the books of current pupils shows that the most able children, particularly in Year 6, are making better progress in writing, but that weaknesses in spelling impact negatively on the quality of their work. In some year groups, most-able pupils receive work, especially in mathematics, that is too easy and does not challenge them sufficiently to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made less progress in reading and writing than their non-disadvantaged peers and than that of other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2 in 2018, and they scored less well in the national tests. They made progress in mathematics that was similarly weak to that of their peers. Fewer than 40% of Westfield's disadvantaged pupils started secondary school in 2018 having reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A lower proportion of pupils than the average nationally reached the expected standard in the Year 6 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test in 2018. Disadvantaged pupils did less well than other pupils nationally and in the school. Work in the books of current pupils shows that weak spelling continues to be an issue, including, at times, for the most able pupils.
- The attainment of pupils by the end of key stage 1 is improving over time. Pupils in Year 2 in 2018 attained similar standards to those of other pupils nationally in writing, and better than the average nationally at greater depth. Their attainment in reading and in mathematics in 2018 was slightly below the average nationally, including at greater depth. Work in current pupils' books, especially in Year 1, suggests that pupils are making strong progress from their starting points at the end of the early years foundation stage.

- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 in 2018 attained at least as well as their non-disadvantaged peers in the key stage 1 national tests in reading and writing and in some cases better than them. In mathematics, they achieved slightly less well than other pupils in school.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening test has been improving steadily in recent years, as a result of the improvements leaders have made to the quality of phonics teaching. The proportion reaching the national benchmark in 2018 was similar to that of other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils achieved standards that were higher than those of their classmates. Information from pupils' books and from classroom observations suggests that pupils currently in early years and key stage 1 are making strong progress in phonics and applying their skills well.
- Leaders' focus on improving the quality of phonics teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' reading, especially for younger pupils. Most of those who read to inspectors used their phonic skills well to work out unfamiliar words and read with enjoyment because their teachers had selected books carefully, according to pupils' strengths and weaknesses. There was greater variability in the skills and confidence of readers currently in key stage 2, especially where books were not well matched to pupils' reading abilities.
- As a result of effective support, pupils with SEND made strong progress from their individual starting points by the end of their time in Year 6 in 2018. However, pupils of lower ability who do not have SEND made progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the key stage 2 tests that was much less good. This is because the work they receive does not routinely meet their needs, and because leaders and governors have not monitored their progress sufficiently over time.
- Pupils' attainment of the expected standard in science in the 2018 key stage 2 national tests, although below the average nationally, showed a marked improvement from 2017. In key stage 1, most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieved well in science. More pupils than the national average reached the expected standard. Current pupils from both key stages who spoke to inspectors said they enjoy science and were able to talk about their learning from investigations they have carried out.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's early years provision. As a result of the good teaching they receive and the improvements that leaders and managers have made, children in the early years make strong progress from their generally low starting points. The proportion who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception class has risen over time and is now in line with that of other children nationally. Children are therefore well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders have been successful in establishing effective partnerships with parents and other agencies. This helps them to understand better the needs of children and their families, and ensures that they get the support they need, including in accessing the early years pupil premium grant where appropriate. Disadvantaged children currently in the early years are well supported and are making similar progress to their classmates.

- Arrangements for safeguarding children in the early years are effective and are aligned with those across the school. Staff are appropriately qualified, and there are no breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- Leaders and adults have a good understanding of children's needs and interests, because assessment is effective. They use this knowledge to plan a curriculum that helps children to learn well. For example, during the inspection, children were excited to take part in activities following the recent visit of a 'dinosaur' to their classrooms. They developed their vocabulary and made good attempts at writing about what they had seen.
- Children have access to a range of resources that they can select for themselves, as well as to activities that adults lead. On most occasions, adults use questions skilfully to encourage children to share their thoughts and ideas. This helps children to develop their speaking and listening skills, as well as to think carefully.
- Occasionally, the teaching that adults plan does not provide children with enough opportunities to participate, or to think for themselves. When this happens, children sometimes become bored and disengage from their learning, and do not make progress as a result.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is usually good, because adults have established simple but clear routines and rules for them to follow. They learn to share resources and to cooperate, and they tidy up readily when the time comes to put things away.
- Children with SEND are well supported in the early years. Leaders and adults work effectively with parents and other agencies to identify and address children's varying needs and to help them progress well.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 133390 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10042490 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 212 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rev. Steve Axtell |
| Headteacher | Mrs Karen Barley |
| Telephone number | 01900874000 |
| Website | Westfieldprimary.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Email address | kbarley@westfieldprimary.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 13–14 May 2014 |

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is much lower than the average for schools nationally.
- Most pupils are of White British origin. Fewer ethnic groups than average are represented at the school.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The school has a nursery and provides early education for 30 hours per week for children whose parents meet the criteria.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, school staff and the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons and during breaks. Inspectors also spoke formally with a group of pupils, and with some parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a selection of pupils from key stages 1 and 2 reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the current pupils' progress.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of eight responses from parents to the free-text service.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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