

Allonby Primary School

Moss Lane, Allonby, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 6QG

Inspection dates 18 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.

- The committed headteacher and staff have created a happy environment in which children achieve well because they are well taught.
- Each pupil makes good progress. None fall below the expectations set when they start school. Many pupils do even better than expected in relation to their starting points.
- Adults in the school understand pupils well. They keep in touch with their parents and this helps them understand why sometimes pupils make slower or better progress than at other times.
- Teachers take great care to make classrooms welcoming and comfortable so that pupils want to learn.
- Pupils behave well. Most attend very regularly. They are kind to each other. There is no bullying and older or stronger pupils look after younger or weaker ones well.
- Pupils feel extremely safe. They are very well looked after. Their parents are very happy about this. It is a strength of the school.
- Leadership, management and governance are good. There have been many changes over the past year but these have been seamlessly managed. Standards have been maintained, teaching keeps improving and the school looks well set to be able to keep on getting better.
- An important strength of leadership and management is that it is totally committed to serving the school community and making sure that the views of pupils, parents and the community are always taken account of.
- The school's exceptional promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of everything it does and it prepares pupils very well for their future well-being.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils are challenged to the full, especially the most able. Sometimes, pupils are not pulled up quickly enough when they do not produce their best work.
- Pupils do not have sufficient time to respond to their teachers' comments when work is marked so that pupils can learn from their mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of five lessons. They saw both teachers and a teaching assistant teaching.
- Inspectors met with three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The opportunity was taken to talk to several parents as they dropped off their children before school. The views of other parents who responded to the school's own survey were also listened to.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at break times. They also looked at responses to the school's own survey of their views.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and the environment they learn and play in.
- Inspectors looked at the information teachers gather as they check on the progress of pupils.
- School documentation relating to the safeguarding and protection of pupils was looked at alongside many other documents relating to how well it checks the school's effectiveness and plans for improvement.
- On the day of inspection, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were away from school from lunchtime onwards on a residential outdoor and adventure experience part funded through primary sports funding and partly through pupil premium funding. This represented nearly a half of all pupils in the school. They were accompanied by the headteacher. The remaining teacher is a newly qualified teacher. As the most senior member of staff remaining in school during the inspection, she attended the final team meeting and formal feedback of the inspection.
- Achievement was looked at on an individual level. There was one Year 6 leaver last year, no Year 1 pupils and only four Year 2 pupils. In order to protect individuals, generalisations based on several years of outcomes for groups of pupils are made throughout the report.
- Insufficient responses were available to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to undertake an analysis.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Evra

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs is supported both at school action and school action plus. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are similar numbers of boys and girls; all pupils are White British.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils is supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals. In this instance, all of these pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Performance against the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, is not reported because numbers of pupils are too small.
- The headteacher is new since the last inspection. He took up post nearly four years ago, having been a teacher in the school at that time
- The Key Stage 2 teacher is new this year. She is newly qualified.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils to make even faster progress and attain higher levels by:
 - making sure that teachers always expect the best of every pupil and recognise when the most able pupils need to move on more quickly in their learning
 - making sure that pupils have read and understood the comments that teachers have made in their books and responded to them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils do not underachieve in this school. When pupils are not doing as well as expected in English and mathematics they are given effective extra help. A few of the most able pupils might be able to achieve a bit more if they were given a little harder work a bit quicker when it is clear that they already understand what they are being taught. These pupils still do better than expected but could do even better.
- Each year, about two or three children join the Reception class. Some are very able, some of them have significant special educational needs. What is important is that they all get a good deal because individual needs are recognised and plans to help them are quickly made. Occasionally, the youngest children are not given enough opportunities to learn through play and exploration.
- Pupils nearly always join Year 1 at about an average level, except in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the wider world, which is often low. As they grow up, the school's exceptional work to broaden their horizons pays huge dividends.
- Since the last inspection, standards have risen. More and more pupils are meeting and exceeding the expectations that were laid down for them when they first came to the school. Published results can easily mislead. They are often based on the performance of a single child. To compensate for this the school keeps a very close check on the performance of different groups of pupils throughout the school over several years, rather than focussing upon those at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in any current year.
- Thorough checking over several years shows that no group of pupils achieves differently from any other. Recent checks show that those pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve as well as any other group of pupils and that there is very little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs fulfil their potential every bit as well as any of the other pupils.
- Sometimes the most able pupils do not make it clear enough to teachers that they could be doing more and sometimes their teachers do not spot when this is the case. Despite this, all pupils are treated equally and all have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Pupils are encouraged to use the good resources the school provides to help them to improve their reading. They enjoy reading and they keep on getting better at it. As they move through the school they begin to appreciate books more and more and discover how reading for themselves helps them to learn. Older pupils often help younger ones to improve their reading in paired reading exercises each day. Pupils carry out mathematical computations carefully and tackle problems with confidence.
- Pupils are strongly encouraged to develop personal interests and to use their skills and talents in areas that are not formally assessed. The curriculum encourages them to do this. Pupils particularly enjoy physical education and sport. The extra funding coming into the school to support these areas is being very well spent, all pupils are benefiting and nearly all say that sport and adventure activities are amongst their favourites.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are well taught day-in, day-out. There are occasional moments of inspiration and there is the potential for even more. There are many signs that teaching is continuing to improve. Parents are very happy with the way their children are being taught and many pupils say that the best thing about the school is their teacher.
- Classrooms are special places; they are spaces that give pupils help in their learning and celebrate their achievement through vibrant displays. Pupils like their classrooms and their teachers and this encourages them to try hard and enjoy learning.
- Teachers show a very good understanding of what makes their pupils 'tick' and what switches them off. Because of their good relationships with parents and the pupils themselves, they

understand when things are not as they should be for any particular individual.

- Teachers mostly help pupils to make good progress. Sometimes progress slows for the most able pupils when teaching does not recognise the need to move their learning on more quickly.
- Support from teaching assistants is skilled and effective. They are well-briefed about their roles and they provide very effective support for the learning and behaviour of pupils but there are times when they could be directed to doing more productive things, especially at the start of lessons.
- Every bit of work is marked and most of the marking is good. It clearly identifies what has been achieved and often explains what needs to be done to move on. Teachers mark work, but then, occasionally, do not check up on whether pupils have both understood and taken note of what they have said. Pupils do not have sufficient time to respond to their teachers' comments.
- All staff have a good understanding of how to teach pupils how to read. As a result pupils enjoy reading and like books. Older and the more able pupils enjoy contributing to the teaching of reading of younger or the less able pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel extremely safe, are safe and their parents agree. Close checks are kept on any possible risk in any situation, governors keep a close check on the suitability of everyone who works in the school and the premises are safe and secure.
- Pupils are given good advice about the perils that computers and mobile phones can expose them to and how to avoid dangerous or unpleasant situations. Care is taken to make sure that information is well balanced so as not to make pupils fearful.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. There are a few wilful individuals who push boundaries but they are well managed so that their behaviour does not interfere with the learning of other pupils. In this school, misbehaviour usually equates to naughtiness rather than anything more sinister. There is no bullying, no racism and no harassment on record. Pupils feel happy.
- Not all pupils try as hard as they can all of the time. They often have to be reminded to try their hardest and to do what they are capable of all of the time rather than some of it. Handwriting is a classic case when it varies from the sublime to the sloppy in successive pieces of work. However, sometimes teachers do not remind pupils quickly enough to always produce their best work.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are polite and considerate. Many show curiosity about visitors but a few remain wary and avoid conversation.
- Pupils take a lot of care to keep their books neat and tidy. In mathematics they carefully put numbers into squares and when writing they take care to use the lines on their paper to guide them. There are occasional lapses but, in the main, they are proud of their efforts and they are proud of their school.
- Nearly all pupils attend whenever they can. When they do not there are very good systems in place to establish that they are safe and why they are not attending.

The leadership and management are good

- It is no accident that the school keeps getting better. The headteacher teaches for most of the time yet also manages to perform all leadership and management duties especially well. The energy to do this comes from love of the school and dedication to the community.
- There is a constant drive to improve teaching and to make sure that every child who enters the school at any age leaves it with higher hopes than when they entered. The local authority recognises that this is a school that is focused on improvement.
- However, there is currently an over-reliance on the headteacher for all leadership and management duties.
- All staff receive good training opportunities. The newly qualified teacher is being very well supported and is very appreciative of the help and advice received. Staff are given a lot of support to gain higher qualifications and so enhance their skills. Checking up on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is effective in this small school.
- All staff, and not only teachers, are set targets to improve their work. The headteacher acknowledges that a bit more could be done to check that all the targets have been met successfully.
- The good curriculum is enriched by an enormous range of extra events and initiatives that get pupils really excited about what they are either learning or are about to learn. This is a school that gives pupils a good grounding in language and number skills but then moves on to help pupils from a relatively isolated community to see and understand what is on offer in the wider world.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is exceptional. Achievement in any form is celebrated; pupils are made to feel good about themselves. A strong sense of belonging and heritage is promoted. This is a proud village and pupils are taught why and how their ancestors lived. Equally importantly, pupils have very close communication with young people in other countries, especially India, where they have pen pals and keep in regular touch with children of their own age. It is significant that the first thing that a visitor sees on approaching the school is a bold map with the heading 'Our World'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There is a small governing body with vacancies that need to be filled. The governing body works hard to check up on how well the school is doing to give its pupils the best possible opportunities in later life. It takes care to make sure that pupils are kept safe and that they are well taught. They have ensured all requirements are met with regard to safeguarding. Many governors bring special expertise to the school and create close links between the school and the community. Governors, with the good support of the local authority know how well the school is doing and keep a check on the performance of the headteacher. They are well aware of, and sensitive to, the demanding conditions of his work. They are equally aware of the fact that this is currently a school working very effectively within its means and despite very small numbers of pupils it is financially self-sustaining.

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	112100
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	426247

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Holyoake
Headteacher	David Owen
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2008
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