

Morecambe and Heysham Torrisholme Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119283
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379768
Inspection dates	31 January–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Walsh

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Huddart
Headteacher	Susan Penney
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Walsh
Elisabeth Fenwick
Dave Blackburne

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons led by 15 of the school's teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work. They also looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress and arrangements for safeguarding as well as other documents. They scrutinised 194 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and questionnaires from pupils and staff. The responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below that found nationally. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school caters for a number of pupils who have a range of complex needs, including severe physical difficulties.

Currently, the school is without a substantive deputy headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator has taken over the role in a temporary capacity. This, together with staff absence, has contributed to changes to staffing in Key Stage 1. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status and Eco-School status. The school meets the current floor standards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school where pupils achieve well. The majority of parents and carers are full of praise for the school, particularly regarding the good communication with class teachers and the good quality support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' attainment is usually above average by the end of Year 6 because they have made good progress overall during their time in school. However, progress in lessons is uneven in Years 1 to 3, reflecting variations in the quality of teaching.
- Teaching is usually good and there are examples of outstanding teaching. Improvements in teaching include the more effective use of assessment data to match tasks to pupils' needs, resulting in more challenge for more-able pupils and their subsequent better progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good both in lessons and around school. They say they feel safe. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons. They are keen to make progress and are proud of their successes.
- The ambitious leadership and drive of the headteacher, senior leaders and governing body have created the conditions for learning that have allowed pupils to thrive. This includes establishing a good curriculum that contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, in Years 1 to 3 teaching pupils in large groups for phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) means that opportunities for learning are not always maximised. Information relating to the progress of individual pupils is used well to plan lessons. It is not always used effectively to inform leaders' planning by gaining an overview of progress over time for different groups of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make good progress in Years 1 to Year 3 by:
 - improving arrangements for the teaching of phonics
 - ensuring that teachers are absolutely clear what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson
 - making sure that lessons are well-structured so that learning is maximised
 - making frequent checks on pupils' learning during every lesson
 - ensuring that marking tells pupils exactly how to improve their work.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring and evaluation and therefore the capacity for further improvement by using data more effectively to provide an overview of pupils' progress over time and to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers reflect inspection findings when they say that their children are making good progress overall in lessons. When children join the Reception class their personal and social skills are similar to those expected for their age, but their skills in language, communication and literacy and calculation are below expectations. They make good progress in the Reception class because of good teaching linked with an interesting curriculum. By the time they join Year 1, many of their skills are above those expected for their age, although their skills in linking sounds and letters and writing are not as well-developed. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is usually above the national average, it dipped to average in 2011. Currently, pupils in Key Stage 1 are making satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 has remained at an average level for many years. Pupils who are making slower progress than others in their reading often recognise the initial letter sounds of words and some make good use of picture clues. However, several have not fully developed the skills of connecting groups of letters with certain sounds and are not always able to blend sounds together.

Although attainment is above average overall by the time pupils leave Year 6, it is higher in reading and mathematics than in writing. Pupils' progress quickly accelerates as they move up through the classes in Key Stage 2. Most teachers in Key Stage 2 are skilled at teaching pupils more advanced reading skills. For example, in a Year 5 lesson about report writing pupils were taught about how to extract information from text and use this to inform their writing. Pupils are improving their writing skills and by the time they reach Year 6 their writing engages the reader well because they use humour effectively, have a good range of vocabulary and vary the way they construct sentences. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because the work set is carefully matched to their needs. Teaching assistants are proficient at appropriately rephrasing explanations to ensure that these pupils fully understand the concepts that are being taught. They also ensure that these pupils have access to a good range of resources that are used well to support their learning. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve as well as their peers because they are well supported if their circumstances are challenging.

Quality of teaching

As a result of mainly good and some outstanding, teaching, pupils including those disabled or with special educational needs achieve well over time. Many parents and carers understandably say that teaching is good overall and comment positively on the way teachers help their children to gain confidence. Many teachers are good at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the pupils, including boys talk positively about themes, for example, the lessons about space brought about a particular sense of awe and wonder. Teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 4 to 6. Although teaching is improving in Years 1 to 3, there are some remaining variations in teachers' skills. A small number of lessons lacks clarity because teachers have not been clear enough about what they expect pupils to learn in the session. Additionally, the lack of a robust structure to these lessons means that learning is not built up systematically and this slows pupils' progress. Most teachers ensure that work is consistently well matched to pupils' ability level. Better challenge for the more-able pupils has boosted their progress, particularly in mathematics.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and pupils respond very well to praise from their teachers. In the best lessons, teachers are very rigorous in the way they check learning and are very prompt to correct misconceptions. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about punctuation, the use of cartoon super heroes as a subject ensured that boys and girls were equally well motivated. Questioning was used exceptionally well to check and extend learning. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers do not always check frequently enough on the work of those who are working independently. Although there is some detailed marking that gives pupils good guidance, other marking is merely congratulatory. While the positive comments and grades boost pupils' self-esteem, pupils are sometimes getting limited guidance about how to improve their work, especially their writing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The staff have created an ethos that promotes positive attitudes to learning and an environment that allows pupils to feel safe. Pupils' thoughtful and considerate behaviour makes an important contribution to this well-ordered school. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and they consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons, and are keen to get on with their work. They are particularly supportive of others' with complex additional needs and willingly offer to help out when needed. Most parents and carers say that their children are very happy at school and, together with many pupils, say they have no experience of bullying in any form. However, a small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying that are specific to a small number of classes. The school has responded appropriately to these concerns and has done much to discourage bullying, including through the work of the learning mentor. The school provides pupils with appropriate guidance about staying safe, including using computers. For example, many have completed a course that encourages safe cycling. Pupils attend school regularly and attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

Accelerated progress and rising attainment, particularly in mathematics, reflect the high expectations of key leaders, including the governing body, and illustrate the school's good capacity to improve further. There is a coherent programme of monitoring and evaluation

that is securely linked to development planning. This involves a wide range of industrious staff who take their management responsibilities very seriously. Their observations of teaching are particularly thorough. Consequently, the school has been able to identify exactly where teaching needed to develop. The good use of coaching has ensured that teachers have improved their skills, although some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 3. The school has extensive information about the progress made by individual pupils. This is used well to ensure that any pupil who is danger of falling behind is quickly identified and offered timely support. It is used less efficiently to measure the progress made by different classes and year groups over time. Therefore leaders, including the governing body, do not have all the necessary tools that would allow them to quickly identify and respond to any changes to patterns of progress.

The broad and balanced curriculum meets pupils' needs well overall and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Provision for extra-curricular activities, such as sport and music, are particularly strong and a wide range of enriching activities such as residential visits and regular concerts contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school does not take full advantage of its large size or all available staffing to ensure that pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught to link letters and sounds in small groups within which activities can be very closely matched to their ability level. Leaders and managers actively promote equality and effectively tackle discrimination. Gaps between outcomes for different groups of pupils are narrowing. The school is particularly successful at ensuring that those pupils who have complex needs are fully involved in school life. School staff have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures that fully meet requirements, and have received appropriate training regarding child protection. They are vigilant in their efforts to keep children safe.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morecambe and Heysham Torrisholme Community Primary School, Morecambe, LA4 6PN

It was a delight and a privilege to inspect your school. All the team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. We were very impressed by your good manners and the thoughtful way you treat adults and each other. We really enjoyed seeing Year 4 rehearse their play about Robin Hood. We also liked reading your writing because it's funny and interesting. We know that you have lots of exciting things to do in school and saw how enthusiastic you were about sport and music.

You go to a good school. Your attainment is above average. There is a lot of good teaching. Although you make good progress, the children in the Reception class and older pupils make faster progress than pupils in Years 1 to 3. We have asked the teachers in these classes to look again at the way they group you for phonics lessons and to improve aspects of the quality of teaching in these year groups. This includes making sure that teachers are really clear about what they want you to learn in lessons and making certain that lessons are always well-organised. We have also asked them to check your learning more regularly in lessons and to make sure their marking tells you exactly how to improve your work.

The leaders and managers at your school are doing a good job. We have asked the school leaders to make more use of the information they have about your progress to help them manage the school even better. You can assist your school to improve even further by continuing to try very hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Walsh

Lead Inspector

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