

Norman Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112219
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357068
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Adrian Francis

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	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rebecca Long
Headteacher	Mr Nick Page
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, observed 13 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, its improvement plans, reports on the school's work, records of pupils' progress and teachers' lessons plans. They analysed 111 questionnaires returned from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum is of a high- enough standard to maintain recent improvements in achievement, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The extent to which the school provides for, and evaluates, the achievement of all groups of pupils as they move through the school.
- Whether the school's leaders and managers are making sufficient impact on school improvement.
- Whether the outcomes for pupils' personal development are as good as the school describes.

Information about the school

Norman Street Primary is slightly larger than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below the national average as is the proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Seven of the 11 classes contain pupils of mixed-age groups. The school has received a number of awards in recognition of its work, including Healthy School status and the Activemark.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher has been in post for just over a term. Also, the school building had been subject to considerable flooding due to burst pipes in December and four of the 11 classes are temporarily located in mobile classrooms on the playground.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Norman Street Primary is a satisfactory school. Pupils overwhelmingly say they enjoy coming to school. Staff work hard and effectively to provide a good standard of care and support, and are proud to be part of the school's team. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress during their time there. Pupils reach standards that are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. While some teaching is good, it is not consistently so and pupils' progress is, therefore, satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is not making sufficient use of assessment data to plan work which matches individual needs, and the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not yet high enough.

Through strong links with parents and carers and some developing partnerships with a range of agencies, the school effectively promotes the personal well-being of its pupils. The school is working successfully with the recently established parent teacher association and has begun to organise events to support children's learning as well as a number of social events. Parental support for the school and for the new headteacher is strong.

Although satisfactory, the curriculum is improving with a renewed emphasis on cross-curricular links. This is beginning to enable pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills satisfactorily. A range of enrichment activities enable pupils to pursue their interests further. Pastoral care arrangements are good and there are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils feel very safe and parents' and carers' comments confirm their high level of confidence in the school with regard to the safety of their children.

The senior leadership team is now beginning to drive school improvement, with school self-evaluation correctly beginning to identify priorities for improvement. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future and is supported by an increasingly pro-active and knowledgeable governing body. Since his appointment, the headteacher has made improving the quality of teaching and learning a high priority, although the evaluation of strategies to raise achievement and the analysis of pupils' progress data are not yet well developed. However, leaders recognise that this is the case and the improving evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is leading to more detailed plans for improvement. At this early stage the school has had limited time to establish a record of improvement. Taken together, these findings demonstrate the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress by:

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- - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and by providing greater challenge for all groups
- - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring that teachers deliver exciting lessons to encourage the active engagement of all pupils
- - making more effective use of assessment information and marking so that teachers guide pupils as to what is expected of them and how to achieve challenging targets
- - ensuring that leaders at all levels plan effectively for better outcomes for pupils, based on a thorough evaluation of strategies used and an accurate analysis of pupils' progress data.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The quality of pupils' learning seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Discussions with pupils, reviews of samples of pupils' work and observations of teaching, however, indicate that pupils could do better. This is the case for all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. In some lessons, pupils' progress is beginning to improve as a result of recent actions. In one Year 5/6 lesson, pupils made good progress when they were encouraged to apply their knowledge of line graphs to everyday situations in order to check their understanding. Working independently and with concentration, pupils enjoyed this work and could explain their understanding of the problem clearly.

Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles, their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and their contribution to the community are good. They make good choices about staying fit and keeping healthy and take full advantage of the opportunities to take part in activities organised outside the school day. Good guidance on how to make healthy choices is embedded through the curriculum and pupils welcome the emphasis by the school on internet safety. Pupils have been involved in improving the school's environment and they regularly fundraise for a range of charities. Within the school, they take on responsibilities through roles, such as house captains, prefects, and school council members. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is good and they enjoy taking part in a range of curricular enrichment activities, although their cultural awareness is less well developed. The school has identified this as a priority and is developing plans to improve provision. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and this underpins their good behaviour. Pupils are generally confident, they enjoy school and feel valued.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure and additional adults in classes offer satisfactory levels of support. Where the teaching is good, more imaginative tasks are presented to the pupils and in these lessons pupils are more strongly motivated, there is a greater degree of challenge and teachers have pinpointed pupils' learning needs more effectively. However, good teaching is not sufficiently widespread across the school. Pupils are often too passive in lessons and as a result, some pupils lose concentration. Although assessment procedures have begun to be improved recently, these are not yet being used skilfully enough by all to ensure that tasks in lessons are matched to pupils' learning needs. Teachers' marking is not consistently effective in indicating to pupils how they might improve their work.

The thematic curriculum, currently being developed, is enriched with some opportunities to capture pupils' interests but these are not widespread and opportunities are not always taken to make good use of visits and visitors to provide an exciting stimulus for learning. There are times when there is an over-reliance on undemanding low-level tasks, such as worksheets, particularly in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which offer opportunities to extend pupils' involvement and learning. One example is the 'F1 project' in which a group of older pupils designed a balsa wood racing car that was made to a high specification by a manufacturing company, and will be entered into a national competition.

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Care, guidance and support are good. Individual pupils with specific needs are well supported and, as a result of the school's pro-active approach, attendance has improved over the past year.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and a governing body that is becoming more engaged in a focus on improving pupils' outcomes. However, leadership roles and responsibilities do not always reflect the needs of the school with middle leaders not yet having a key role in the evaluation of the school's work and linking this to ways of improving the teaching and learning. As a result, while there is evidence of some good practice, with high expectations and a drive for improvement, these are not consistently embedded across the school and the rate of improvement is not as swift as it might be. While the school gathers a range of pupils' progress data, this is not always analysed rigorously enough to inform clear targets for improvement.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; the recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body is very knowledgeable and is keen to extend the governors' role as critical friends in tackling weaknesses and supporting the school in its drive for improvement. Recent initiatives have resulted in some improvements, but the changes are at an early stage. The current focus on improving the quality of provision across the school shows that leaders and managers are aware of what is most needed to improve outcomes for all pupils.

The school engages well with parents and carers. The opportunities for them to engage with the school are increasing and the school is actively looking for ways to involve them more in their children's learning. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory, and there are some opportunities to promote community cohesion through links with the local church and other schools in the area. Plans to develop links nationally and internationally are in the early stages. Leaders and managers at all levels satisfactorily promote equality and tackle discrimination. As pupils' achievement is satisfactory the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Reception classes, develop confidence and benefit from the supportive and caring work of adults. Children's welfare is given a high priority and staff ensure that their physical and social needs are well met. Children's behaviour is good and they relate positively to one another, developing a good awareness of the need to keep safe and eat healthily. Effective induction procedures help children to quickly learn school routines. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and by the start of Year 1 many are working at just below the expected levels for children of this age. Although language and literacy skills are lower, they are improving as a result of a good focus on regular teaching of letter sounds. However, children's progress in reception is inhibited when they have to sit and listen to adults for too long and they are not actively involved in practical tasks.

Provision is better during the afternoon sessions when children have opportunities to choose the direction of their own learning and have continuous access to the indoor and outdoor areas. For example, children showed that they were able to be active and independent learners when they worked very happily together planning their own dragon dance and by adding a musical accompaniment. The curriculum is satisfactory overall for the Reception Year children but there is a more limited awareness among the adults of the best way that young children learn. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The leader is working with the local authority to make improvements.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They are supportive and say that their children enjoy school, feel very safe and are well cared for. Parents and carers are impressed with the open approach of the headteacher and welcome the opportunity to be more engaged with the school. Several parents and carers have concerns about the progress their children are making and the quality of information provided by the school about their children's progress. Some parents and carers expressed concerns with the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the school is addressing concerns relating to pupils' progress information and has begun to provide workshops for parents and carers to assist them in supporting their children's learning. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and the ways in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour to be effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norman Street Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 301 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	59	41	37	4	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	71	64	39	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	41	57	51	9	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	33	60	54	7	6	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	45	41	61	55	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	31	69	62	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	33	68	61	5	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	31	65	59	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	34	64	58	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	30	69	62	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	29	65	59	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	46	57	51	0	0	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	50	52	47	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norman Street Primary School, Carlisle, CA1 2BQ

The time my colleagues and I spent with you was most enjoyable and we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school.

The purpose of our visit was to find out how well your school is doing. We found that you go to a satisfactory school. This means that the school does some things well but some things need to be improved. I can see why you get on well with your headteacher and like your teachers a lot. They are very caring and supportive but some of you are not achieving as well as you could do.

The governors, staff and your new headteacher work hard to make sure you are safe and well looked after. You know how to stay safe and keep yourselves fit and healthy. In lessons you behave well and you are polite and kind to each other. Your headteacher knows that your personal development is good but wants to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that you can make faster progress and reach higher standards.

We have asked the school to do the following to improve the school further:

- to provide you with work that is a better match to your level of ability so that it is more challenging and you can achieve higher standards
- to improve the quality of teaching and ensure lessons are more exciting
- to improve teachers' marking and the use of other assessments so that you have a clearer idea of how to improve your work and the level you need to reach
- to check more regularly that you are making better progress and also to plan how best to improve how well you are doing.

I am sure you will play your part in helping your teachers to improve Norman Street. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Francis

Lead Inspector

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