

St Bees Village Primary School

Main Street, St Bees, Cumbria, CA27 0AA

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Good leadership and teamwork have ensured that pupils make good progress throughout the school in English and mathematics. From broadly average starting points achievement is improving so that attainment is above, and sometimes significantly above, average at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching across the school is good with examples of outstanding teaching in both key stages. Teachers build strong relationships with pupils and this has a positive effect on pupils' willingness to work hard.
- The school is very successful in providing additional help for pupils who need it.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to work contribute strongly to their good achievement.
- Pupils behave well in lessons as well as around the school and they clearly understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good because they know that what teachers offer helps them to learn.
- School leaders and the governing body are ambitious for the school and are constantly seeking ways to improve it further. Activities to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness are good.
- The governing body is active in monitoring the school, working closely with the staff to ensure that the school continues to improve and develop.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some lessons when pupils are not consistently challenged in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' individual targets are not always sharp enough for their needs and abilities.
- Pupils are not always given enough information on how to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine teachers as well as five teaching assistants, and visited 13 lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, English and mathematics subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' work, listened to pupils read and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, systems for tracking pupils' progress, documents regarding the safeguarding of pupils and key policies.
- Inspectors took account of the responses of the on-line questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Sue Sharkey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bees Village Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs and a Pre-School on the school site which are not managed by the governing body. These are subject to separate inspections and reports of their quality are available on the Ofsted website.
- The school hosts the local authority library for St Bees which is open for two half-days each week.
- The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school holds the Healthy School Award, Activemark and Artsmark awards for its work in sports and the arts and the International School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching to consistently outstanding, in order to further improve pupils' progress, by:
 - sharpening pupils' individual targets in English and mathematics
 - making consistent use of assessment information to plan work that always challenges and closely matches the needs and abilities of all pupils
 - improving marking so that pupils know what they have to do next in order to improve their work in mathematics
 - extending the opportunities staff have to share and build on good practice, particularly across Key Stages 1 and 2.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enjoy learning from their start in the Reception class where good quality care and support help them to make good progress. They enter the school with overall skills similar to other children of the same age but some have lower than expected skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The school is continually improving the outdoor area and access to Forest School's outdoor learning for one afternoon a week enriches children's learning, providing positive enjoyment.
- Reception children enjoy learning together, sharing ideas, exploring friendships, and learning to manage their behaviour and to develop self-control. Their keen involvement in a variety of activities develops their concentration and learning well.
- As pupils continue through Key Stages 1 and 2 progress remains good in English and mathematics. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and those who are eligible for pupil premium support are quickly identified and supported well by well-trained teaching assistants. As a result, they also make good progress.
- Most pupils make expected progress and the proportion exceeding expected progress compares favourably with the national average. The majority of parents agree that their children make good progress.
- As a result of regular teaching of letters and sounds, pupils have obvious enthusiasm for reading. They talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and their personal preferences for different styles of books. The school has a wide stock of books for pupils to choose and excellent use is made of the village library which is situated within the school building. This ensures that pupils are constantly able to read a wide selection of books which is reflected in their good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in reading. Pupils enjoy selecting their own books or recommending one to a friend.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is above average and rising rapidly. Reading, writing and mathematics are used well across different subjects, for example science and geography, to ensure good development of these basic skills.
- Work in pupils' books is well presented, it shows a good range of work in English and mathematics and an appropriate amount for the beginning of the school year.
- Pupils' eagerness to learn is clearly evident, they say that lessons can be fun and this helps them learn. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were using role play to understand the main characters in a story. In pairs they discussed enthusiastically, recalling what they already knew about Pandora and Epimetheus. Pupils then used good questioning skills to seek information from the two characters who, in their acting role, responded confidently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Strengths in teaching include relationships throughout the school which have a positive impact on pupils' willingness to learn, pupils' good level of concentration and teachers' clear expectations of good behaviour ensuring that lessons run smoothly. Pupils appreciate the efforts of staff to provide interesting lessons and the help they provide when they are unsure.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning well in lessons through effective questioning and good explanations of how to improve their work. However, the marking of pupils' work in books, in mathematics, does not always point out clearly to pupils their next steps in learning.
- Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, explanations are clear, teachers' subject knowledge is very good and the range of activities and challenges caters well for all pupils' needs. However, assessment information is not used consistently enough in all lessons to ensure that work always challenges pupils and closely matches their needs in English and mathematics.

- Increasingly effective teaching has contributed to pupils' steadily improving progress. The majority of parents feel that their children are taught well and inspection evidence confirms this.
- The work of teaching assistants is of a high quality. They are deployed effectively and have a positive impact on pupils' progress. They often work with individuals or small groups of pupils who benefit from work that is tailored closely to their individual needs. Pupil premium funding, used for these activities, ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils say that their targets are very useful in helping them to know what they have achieved and what they need to learn next but they are not always sharp enough for pupils' specific individual needs.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to engage in practical activities, share their thoughts with each other and challenge through asking questions. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils were exploring calculations through using money. Each group had their own task and although some pupils were working individually the teacher encouraged them to cooperate with each other in order to check their findings.
- Teachers place a high priority on increasing pupils' self-esteem and confidence and they promote their personal development well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In all classes behaviour is good and sometimes it is exemplary. This contributes well to the progress pupils make in their learning. Behaviour in the playground is equally good.
- Pupils agree that behaviour is good; they acknowledge that there can be disagreements and fallings out which are quickly resolved by staff. They say these incidents are not bullying. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different kinds of bullying, for example cyber-bullying, through the curriculum.
- Pupils follow rules well and understand how to move around the school, which is built on a steep slope, in order to ensure that everyone is safe. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they feel confident in talking to any adult if they have a problem. Most parents who recorded their views on Parent View agree that their children are safe and looked after well, and the large majority are pleased with pupils' behaviour.
- One of the school's strengths is that each pupil is known well by staff, who are able to keep a close eye on their welfare and well-being, enhancing their safety.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. Each class has two representatives on the school council which is proactive in helping the school to improve. The most recent venture is to improve the school playgrounds so that there are more opportunities for a wider range of activities for everyone. Pupils enjoy classroom responsibilities as well as helping with younger pupils at break time.
- The school works closely with parents and, as a result, attendance has risen over the last year and is now above average.
- Pupils have good positive attitudes to learning, settling quickly into lessons, and are soon absorbed in their work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well supported by other members of the senior leadership team. Together they lead a strong team of staff and, with members of the governing body, they share a united ambition to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor and record the school's work. As a result, senior leaders have a secure view of its strengths and weaknesses and of pupils' achievement.

- Through performance management staff are supported by well-targeted professional development, this is often through support from the local authority. This has led to improvements in achievement and in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff share good practice within their key stages but this does not yet stretch across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The school's capacity to improve is evidenced by its rising achievement and attendance and by the improved teaching that has been established.
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity well and ensure that there is no discrimination. This can be seen in the good progress made by all groups of pupils.
- Pupils play an important role in the community and are proactive in raising money for a wide range of charities. The broad, imaginative and well-enriched curriculum includes a wide range of after-school clubs with a focus on music and sporting activities. The school has been particularly successful in tag rugby and is proud to have played at Twickenham and recently played in the National Finals at Rugby School.
- In such ways the curriculum makes a positive contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and continues to improve pupils' academic and personal development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an astute knowledge of the school and has significantly improved its monitoring and evaluating role since the last inspection. It plays a key role in checking on the school's performance and, in doing so, challenges the school regularly.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
 - Governors work closely with all the school staff and have welcomed collaborative support, training and guidance from the local authority.

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	112164
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	401240

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	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Wilson
Headteacher	John Wood
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2010
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