

Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School

Marsden Hall Road North , Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 8JJ

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 has improved, it remains below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Increasing numbers of pupils are making good progress, but progress across the school and in different subjects is not consistently strong.
- A lot of teaching is good, but it is not consistently so in all classes and subjects.
- Teaching and marking of pupils' work do not always help pupils understand what they need to do to make progress.
- Actions taken by senior leaders have not yet led to enough improvement in teaching to make it consistently good, nor to all pupils making sufficiently rapid progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides a happy and positive ethos. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for.
- There are high expectations of behaviour. Pupils behave well and are eager to learn.
- Leaders at all levels know the school well and accurately assess what needs to be done to bring about further improvements.
- The governing body have a good understanding of the school and have helped to drive improvements.
- Children in Reception class get off to a good start and make good progress.
- The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds. Particularly good support is provided for those pupils who do not speak English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to children read and evaluated the quality of pupils' work in a selection of their workbooks.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of eight responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the most recent parental survey carried out by the school. They also took account of questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including data on pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, the school development plan, records of monitoring of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documentation in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Liam Trippier

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional funding (pupil premium) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average and is increasing each year. The majority of these pupils are from Eastern European countries and join the school during Key Stage 1 and 2.
- A breakfast club is provided by the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught systematically
 - precise teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation to improve the structure of pupils' written work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different subjects
 - systematic teaching of skills in mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in mathematics to problem solving.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all of it is good or better by:
 - continuing to share the good and outstanding elements of teaching that already exist
 - making sure, in lessons, that pupils always know exactly what is expected of them in order to make progress
 - using marking more effectively to provide precise guidance for pupils on how to improve their work and giving pupils opportunities to respond to this
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are always used as effectively as they are in the best lessons to support pupils' learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning over time more rigorously to ensure its consistency
 - building on the existing accurate assessment of pupils' achievement in order to bring about more rapid progress for pupils and raise attainment further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved over the past four years, but standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in both English and mathematics, remain below average. However, the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics has risen and is now broadly average.
- The school's data show that more pupils now make expected or better progress. There is evidence of accelerated progress in some year groups but not all. Overall, from low starting points, pupils make adequate, rather than good, progress.
- Most children start school with skills below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age. Many have difficulties with language and communication. Children make good progress in Reception classes because of the well-planned activities focused on developing their speaking and vocabulary. Many of them start Year 1 with broadly average skills for their age.
- In Key Stage 1, only a minority of pupils reach the expected standard for reading words. This is because the teaching of letters and sounds has not been sufficiently systematic.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is consistently low in reading, writing and mathematics, with few pupils reaching higher levels, particularly in writing. In part, this is due to the number of pupils starting school during Key Stage 1, who do not speak English. However, pupils' workbooks show that skills for writing sentences, spelling and mathematics are not being taught sufficiently systematically.
- The school's focus on improving pupils' writing includes the use of topics to stimulate pupils' imagination. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their independent writing skills or to write at length. Specific teaching of grammar and punctuation is not always precise. Pupils now make better progress in writing, but are still not doing as well as in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is better than in English but is, nevertheless, below average. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems.
- The increasing numbers of pupils who do not speak English and who join the school during Key Stage 1 and 2 are particularly well supported by multilingual teaching assistants. Most of them make good or better progress.
- Good support, which is flexible to meet pupils' changing needs, and includes individual and small group teaching, ensures that, overall, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil-premium funding, make similar progress to other groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Much teaching is good and some is outstanding. This is contributing to improvements in achievement. Caring relationships, with regular praise and encouragement, are a feature of all lessons. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are confident to attempt new tasks.
- In the best lessons, teachers make it clear what pupils are going to learn. Pupils at different levels know exactly what they need to do. They are involved in developing their own success criteria, such as when pupils in Year 3 and 4 identify the skills needed to interview 'Neil Armstrong' and be a good listener. Pupils have opportunities to assess their own progress. Resources are well organised and provide prompts for pupils so they can work on their own.
- In many lessons, teachers ask searching questions to check and deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 explain how to arrange a selection of flowers in order of size and so develop their understanding of measuring.
- Pupils make the best progress in lessons where teaching assistants are fully involved in supporting pupils at all stages of the lesson and where they have a clear understanding of the pupils' needs and abilities. They know just when to help pupils and when to allow them to work

more independently.

- However, teaching across the school remains too variable to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress over time. Sometimes pupils spend too long as a whole class listening to the teacher when they could be doing activities at their own level. Pupils are not always so clear about what is expected of them and resources are not used well to help pupils learn. Sometimes teaching assistants do not play such an active part in lessons or are less clear about how best to support pupils' learning.
- The marking of pupils' work usually indicates whether they have achieved what was expected. Pupils understand the system of coloured highlighting, but do not always receive precise guidance on how to improve their work, or specific opportunities afterwards to practise and make their work better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- This is a happy school where pupils are respectful, courteous and friendly. They willingly take responsibility and carry out jobs entrusted to them conscientiously.
- Consistent behaviour management ensures that pupils mostly behave well in lessons and when playing together. Pupils appreciate the wide range of games and equipment available to them at lunchtimes, which means they are never bored. Most pupils move around the school in a sensible and orderly manner so time is not wasted when they go to different lessons.
- Pupils are sensitive to others' needs, quickly resolve arguments themselves and show empathy and understanding towards others, such as those who have limited skills in English.
- Pupils who might otherwise find lunchtimes difficult are able to attend the nurture group. They say how much they enjoy this quiet and calm environment and how it helps them to learn better in the afternoons.
- Pupils know how hurtful name calling can be. Incidents of bullying and racism are extremely rare. Parents agree that pupils are safe and well cared for in school. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- A range of successful strategies, including rigorous systems for checking up on the reasons for absence and promoting the importance of good attendance to parents, has improved pupils' punctuality and attendance, which is now average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school has moved forward in recent years, largely due to the commitment of the headteacher, supported by senior leaders and governors. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Senior leaders know the school well. They have identified that progress is not uniformly good across the school. Actions taken, such as sharing the best teaching, have helped to raise standards and improve progress. However, some actions, such as a more systematic way of teaching reading, are at an early stage and their success cannot yet be measured.
- Senior leaders regularly observe lessons and give teachers clear advice to help them improve. Procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning over time, including checking work in pupils' books, are not sufficiently rigorous.
- Performance management is used to set targets for staff, appropriate to their roles and experience, which are clearly focused on improving pupils' progress. Staff have a shared sense of responsibility and decisions relating to salary progression are linked to how well targets are met. Training for all staff to develop their professional skills further is helping to drive improvement.
- All parents say how welcome they feel in school. They know the school goes to considerable lengths to support them, to provide guidance on how they can help their children and to point them towards other services where this will be of benefit to them and their families.

- The curriculum is currently under review to ensure that it provides a whole-school programme which focuses on systematically developing pupils' skills and which will lead to further improvements in pupils' performance.
- A wide range of additional activities, including a variety of sports and residential visits successfully develop pupils' personal and social skills. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' creative skills through art, music and drama, and providing them with rich experiences on well planned visits and themed projects, contributes extremely well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority provides good levels of support for the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors of the school are knowledgeable about the work of the school and support senior leaders very effectively. They ask challenging questions and understand what still needs to be done to improve the school. The governing body understands its legal responsibilities and ensures that resources, including pupil-premium funding, are managed well and targeted specifically to improve outcomes for pupils.

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	119281
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405847

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	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Hubbert
Headteacher	Ian Chester
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2011
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