

Maryport CofE Junior School

CampRoad, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 6JN

Inspection dates

27–28 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 make adequate progress in English and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6, there are inconsistencies in the amount of progress that pupils make year-on-year.
- There are some examples of good teaching but teachers do not always plan lessons well enough to consistently get the best out of all of the pupils.
- Not enough marking gives the pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work.
- Turbulence in leadership has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and of tracking how well pupils are learning. There has not yet been sufficient time for recent changes to bring about enough improvement in teaching or pupils' progress throughout the school.
- The governing body has yet to develop its skills so as to be able to measure accurately the impact of recent initiatives on improving pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The strong leadership of the acting headteacher is driving change. Teachers are now accountable for their areas of responsibility and as a team they work with the teaching assistants to develop new ways for pupils to enjoy learning.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are respectful towards each other, the adults around them and visitors to the school. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Many take on extra responsibilities through the school council and the eco-group. This helps them to develop as young people who take pride in their local community.
- The curriculum is now more creative and pupils particularly enjoy topic work. They talk enthusiastically about trips, residential visits and the opportunities to work with visiting professionals. This encourages their personal development alongside their academic growth.
- There is now more consistency in the way that leaders and managers record how well pupils are learning. There is a team approach to supporting those who may be getting behind with aspects of their work. This helps pupils to catch up quickly which increases their confidence and eagerness to learn.
- Sport and music are central to the school and bring generations of families together.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six teachers and visited nine lessons. In addition, a number of short visits were made to lessons.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, subject leaders, parents, a representative from the local authority, the Chair and one other member of the Governing Body.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, local authority reports, records of pupils' current attainment and progress, documents relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and pupils' work.
- There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to the inspection. The 12 responses received during the inspection were taken into account by the inspector.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Maryport CofE is a smaller than average-size junior school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average whereas the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Children are now taught in five classes which include single-age classes for Years 3, 4 and some Year 6 pupils, plus two mixed-age classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- There has been turbulence in the school's leadership since the previous inspection. There were two successive acting headteachers in place during the absence and subsequent departure of the previous headteacher. The former deputy headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher in April 2012. There have been further significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection.
- The school holds the Activemark for achievement in sports.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - checking regularly that pupils are understanding their work and quickly adapting teaching so that all pupils are learning quickly enough
 - setting work for pupils which encourages them to work out things for themselves
 - having more consistency in the quality of teachers' marking and explanations on how pupils can improve their work.
- Ensure that all pupils make good or better progress in both English and mathematics by:
 - continually checking the accuracy of pupils' answers in mental mathematics sessions to increase their ability to use this skill quickly to answer number problems
 - having consistently high expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work, including accuracy in spelling and punctuation, across all subjects.
- Continue the drive for improving the school by ensuring leaders and managers:
 - regularly check that teachers are using the information on how well pupils are learning in order to plan lessons which bring out the best in pupils, whatever their level of ability
 - check that pupils make at least good progress during each year of school.
- Develop the skills of the governing body to work with senior leaders to accurately measure the impact of recent and future changes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils settle very quickly into school as a result of good links between teachers, families and local infant schools. Staff ensure that Year 2 pupils and their parents have opportunities to visit Maryport CofE Junior on a number of occasions so that they are familiar with the school environment, the staff and other pupils before they join Year 3.
- The school's assessments and inspection evidence show that most pupils start school with skills in English and mathematics that are broadly typical for their age.
- Following the previous inspection, the progress of pupils in 2011 was much slower than expected and this was directly linked to significant disruption to staffing, including the leadership of the school. However, in 2012, Year 6 pupils overall made expected progress and left school with skills in English and mathematics that were in line with national standards. There was a noticeable improvement in the progress made by the less-able pupils compared to the previous year. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the amount of progress that pupils are making year-on-year in the school.
- Since the acting headteacher took on the role of special educational needs coordinator, pupils with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium are progressing as well as other pupils in the school and across the country. This demonstrates that the school suitably promotes equality of opportunity.
- The development of reading skills is a priority and there are now sessions in the timetable for pupils to read to themselves and to have their reading skills checked. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly listen to the younger pupils read and also older pupils who are not as confident with their reading. In addition, pupils really enjoy using the computer program that the school has invested in which allows them to check their understanding of different words and also their understanding of the story they have read. Pupils are now leaving school with reading skills which are slightly above average and improving, which is helping them to improve their progress in other subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- While there is evidence of some good teaching, too much still requires improvement. This is why overall pupils are reaching the expected standard, and not higher, by the time they leave Year 6.
- Too often, the whole class is given a lengthy explanation by the teacher when the more-able pupils could move on more quickly to try out new ideas and work independently.
- When the teaching is at its best, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons closely together to ensure pupils are given work to get the best out of them. Consequently, pupils learn very quickly because they are given work which matches their ability and they are finding out things for themselves.
- An example of this was seen in a Year 4 English lesson when pupils were writing an explanation of how to set up a circuit. The teacher had planned the lesson extremely well so that the pupils could use their experience gained during an experiment in a previous technology lesson. They could draw on what they had learnt to develop their writing and used appropriate technical vocabulary to ensure that the sequence of events followed in the correct order. This ensured that pupils made rapid progress.
- Occasionally, lessons are not always planned well enough to provide pupils with opportunities to work out things for themselves. Sometimes, teachers are not swift enough in identifying when pupils are finding the work either too easy or not fully understanding it, and then acting quickly to adapt the lesson to meet pupils' needs. For example, in mental mathematics sessions, the accuracy of pupils' answers is not always precisely checked and this can lead to slower progress in problem-solving later in the lesson.
- Teachers' expectations of the standard with which pupils present their work, including their

accuracy in spelling and punctuation, vary too much across subjects. This slows pupils' progress in English overall.

- The teaching assistants play an important role in supporting individuals and small groups of pupils both in the classroom and one-to-one and they are now working much more closely with teachers to plan appropriate support.
- While work is regularly marked, there is inconsistency in the quality of feedback to pupils which prevents them from understanding how to make better progress. For example, in Year 4, where teachers share the teaching of the class, the usefulness of the marking varies considerably.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave very well together and are polite and friendly towards staff and visitors to the school. With an atmosphere of mutual respect and compassion toward one another, the school is a strong community.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and this is reflected in responses from parents. Pupils are successfully taught how to measure risks, and why and how to choose good behaviour.
- When talking to pupils, they say that bullying does not happen at their school but they would be able to talk to any adult if they thought that this was happening to them or someone else. They talked about their visitors from Child-line who explained who children could contact if they felt they were at risk of danger.
- All pupils enjoy being a part of their school community. Attendance is average and improving, reflecting the increase in how much more pupils are enjoying their learning.
- Pupils talk about how they particularly enjoy lessons when they are 'practical, investigative and messy'. They explained how the new reading scheme requires, 'so much more concentration because we are quizzed on our understanding', and said that they now read more books to get certificates.
- The collective worship led by Year 3 pupils was a great celebration of the work they have been doing. The older pupils fully encouraged the younger pupils and the parents clearly enjoyed hearing about the range of activities their children have been involved in. Afterwards, parents went into the Year 3 class and their children enthusiastically showed them the work they have done.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- During the period of turbulence in leadership and staffing, the local authority has provided intensive and effective support. This has included appointing two successive acting headteachers until the more recent appointment of the current acting headteacher.
- The strong acting headteacher has a very clear view of how successful the school can be. School leaders, including the governing body, are very committed and determined to drive forward improvements. Already, staff are talking about positive changes and working more as a team.
- Leaders and managers regularly check the progress that pupils are making. There are procedures in place to check how well teaching is helping pupils to learn. However, there is not yet enough rigour in seeing how well teachers use information on pupils' progress to plan activities in lessons to meet the needs of individuals. Similarly, monitoring of the progress that pupils make in each year group and when taught by different teachers, is not sharp enough.
- A more creative curriculum is now being used and this gives pupils the opportunity to learn through topics, which they clearly enjoy.
- The acting headteacher is at an early stage in developing long-term plans to raise standards throughout the school but she clearly knows what needs to be done and how to do it. More time is now being given to subject leaders to work with specialists and other schools in order to increase the opportunities for sharing good and better practice to improve teaching. The headteacher is now holding staff to account for their areas of responsibility.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very committed to seeing the school improve. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. They have an accurate overview of overall provision. However, governors are not yet challenging staff enough on why progress in every class is not consistently strong or on the link to the quality of teaching. Under the leadership of the acting headteacher, governors are now playing a more central role in shaping the long-term plans for the school based on how well pupils are progressing compared to other schools. They have taken important spending decisions, including changes to staff contracts. The governing body has also agreed the use of pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one help and small group work to ensure that all pupils make the same progress.

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	112274
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	401253

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Scholey
Acting Headteacher	Hilda Beggs
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2010
Telephone number	01900 812299
Fax number	01900 817242
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