

Hallbankgate Village School

Hallbankgate, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 2NJ

Inspection dates

18 December 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their varying levels of skills when they enter the school. In 2012, results in Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics were above national figures and almost all pupils made better than expected progress in their learning.
- Achievement in reading is particularly strong and pupils across the school develop a love of books and reading.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The rate of attendance is high. Pupils love to learn. They enjoy lessons a great deal and are very keen to become good learners. Pupils feel very safe in this small school and enjoy being part of 'one big family'. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for by adults in the school.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Teachers make lessons fun and enjoyable. As well as improving pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills securely, they develop pupils' skills and confidence as learners.
- The curriculum challenges pupils and is stimulating. Pupils become thoroughly absorbed in activities that are built around themes and topics. The production of a film about the Titanic disaster involved pupils in a wide range of exciting activities and some very good quality research and writing.
- The headteacher and the governing body have brought stability to the school and improved the confidence of parents and the community in the school. Significant improvements to teaching, achievement and leadership have been made since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet strong enough to lead to pupils' outstanding achievement.
- School leaders are not yet focusing closely enough on transforming good teaching to outstanding teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited parts of four lessons and looked at work in pupils' books. She visited an assembly, had lunch with the pupils and went out on the playground.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a member of the governing body, staff and pupils. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, information on pupils' progress, the most recent report from the local authority and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 11 responses to the Ofsted on-line survey, Parent View, and the school's most recent survey of parents' views carried out in summer 2012. The school's most recent surveys of pupil and staff views were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and the children of service families.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- A new headteacher was appointed in June 2011.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that learning and achievement are outstanding by:
 - including more chances for pupils to practise and improve writing and mathematical skills when they carry out projects that they plan for themselves
 - finding ways for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in more practical real-life situations and in different subjects
 - making sure that any misunderstandings in mathematical concepts that pupils have are recognised quickly and other ways of learning are used to improve their understanding
 - ensuring that all pupils are taught and learn the correct pronunciation of letters and the sounds they make
 - recording and displaying the exciting language that pupils use in class discussions so that they can recall their ideas when they start to write them down
 - setting consistently high expectations in the way pupils present their written work
 - giving pupils more regular chances to improve their work after teachers have shown them how to improve through their marking.
- Focus the training of staff and the feedback teachers receive after checks on teaching more tightly on moving teaching and learning that is good to outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress from their varying levels of skill when they start school. The 2012 results of national assessments in English and mathematics for Year 6 pupils were better than the national figures; almost all pupils reached above average attainment and most made better progress than expected. The school's information on the progress of pupils currently in school shows that most are on track to make good progress.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has fluctuated a great deal from year to year. In 2012, it was broadly average and, for current pupils, it is improving.
- Re-organisation of teaching is leading to better continuity in learning and progress in English and mathematics especially. One teacher teaches and tracks progress in English across all year groups and another does so for mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is especially strong. Several times a week, older pupils read books with younger pupils. Pupils develop a strong love of reading. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are taught systematically to recognise letters and the sounds they make so that most pupils learn the skills to help them to read quickly and accurately. These skills are reinforced continually in all activities that involve the use of language. A few lower-attaining pupils are not fully familiar with all the correct sounds and this holds back their improvement in reading.
- Pupils make good progress in their writing skills. Many exciting events and activities give pupils the chance to practise their writing. They love to use their imaginations to write stories. Staff ensure that writing skills are taught systematically. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn a great deal from each other when the whole class share their ideas for planning a story and describe its setting. Year 2 pupils recognise when they are using similes and a rich variety of vocabulary emerges. However, their ideas are not always recorded and displayed so they miss out on the chance to recall them easily when the time comes to write them down.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because there is continual reinforcement of basic skills and concepts. A variety of activities and a good pace to learning keeps pupils interested. Occasionally, pupils' misunderstanding is not recognised and tackled quickly enough. Pupils do not get the chance to use their mathematical skills in real-life practical situations and in different subjects often enough.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Children get on well with each other and learn good social skills. They benefit from the role-models of older pupils. They develop good communication skills because staff spend considerable time encouraging them to use their imaginations and talk about what they are doing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Staff identify their needs accurately and give them the support they need to achieve well. They are fully involved in all parts of school life.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium make good progress and the achievement gap between them and other pupils is narrowing. Additional funding provides one-to-one support and special programmes of work to help pupils to catch up. Extra staffing ensures smaller teaching groups. The school pays very good attention to equality of opportunity by keeping a very close eye on the progress and well-being of every child, whatever their circumstances.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is supporting pupils' good progress in their learning. Teachers expect a great deal of the pupils and they plan activities that get the most out of pupils whatever their age group or capabilities. Learning moves on at a good pace. However, expectations of the way pupils present their class work are not always high enough, with too much written on odd pieces of paper.

- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and supportive. Pupils say that their teachers are always there to help if they get stuck and do not understand.
- Teachers make lessons fun and enjoyable. They make the most of exciting events and activities to improve pupils' skills in writing, reading and using modern technology. They continually make pupils aware of how they can become better learners. Teachers give pupils lots of chances to talk through their ideas before they write them down.
- Teachers encourage pupils to plan their own projects every week but do not always make sure that pupils have enough chances to practise writing and mathematical skills.
- Pupils are very clear of what they are trying to achieve in every lesson and have clear targets to aim for in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers give pupils good encouragement and useful guidance when they mark their work. Pupils do not always have the chance to follow their teachers' guidance and make improvements to their work.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception Years enjoy stimulating surroundings both inside and outdoors. They have plenty of chance to play, explore and follow their own interests. Well-planned activities ensure they learn early reading, writing and numeracy skills systematically. Staff know the children very well and make sure that they get the best out of every child. Increasingly, parents are closely involved in recognising and supporting their children's progress. Booklets that show what children have been doing are shared with parents regularly. However, these do not always set out clearly what this means in terms of their progress and development. There are plans to improve this through using modern technology.
- Teaching assistants and other adults make a strong contribution to pupils' good learning across the school. They work with individuals and small groups and are particularly effective in supporting pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils are highly considerate and polite to each other and adults. In recent surveys, parents, staff and pupils consider that behaviour is at least good. Rates of attendance are consistently high, showing that pupils are really happy to be in school and learning. There are individual cases of pupils who have come to the school, settled in very well, and improved their behaviour and conduct significantly.
- Pupils love to learn. They enjoy lessons and say teachers make them fun. They are exceptionally keen to improve their learning skills, making them highly reflective learners. They enjoy planning what and how they will learn and undertaking their own learning projects. The model Anderson Shelters and the Spitfire model planes are examples of pupils' meticulous care in producing well-designed products related to the topics they are learning about.
- Pupils feel very safe in this small school where staff know them very well and are always there to help them. Pupils say there is no bullying. They clearly understand about different types of bullying and know what to do if it should occur. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the wider world, including when using modern technology.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the governing body have successfully improved achievement, teaching and leadership since the previous inspection. They have brought stability to the school and improved the confidence of parents and the community in the effectiveness of the school. Morale is good and staff share a determination to improve further.
- The headteacher has a realistic view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve because there are frequent, accurate checks on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. Improvement plans set out the right priorities and help to drive improvement.
- Training for staff is closely linked to the school's priorities and takes individual needs into

account. Staff performance is managed well and progressions in salary are linked to the effectiveness of teaching. However, training and support of staff are not sufficiently focused on moving teaching from good to outstanding. Staff work well with other schools in the area to share what works best in lessons.

- The success of the school's curriculum, based on developing pupils' learning and creative skills alongside well planned progression in the core skills in English and mathematics, is evident in improved achievement and pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- The local authority has provided effective support, particularly for leaders and governors, when appointing new staff and setting up management systems.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving and the effectiveness of the teaching. They understand how the school is performing in relation to other schools across the country. They visit the school frequently and, through well focused checks, find out for themselves how well the school is working. They keep a close eye on the performance of staff and make sure that progressions in salary are justified. They understand how the pupil premium funding is spent and check on how effectively it is used. They fulfil their statutory requirement to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff.

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	112417
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	401264

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Izzy Bowles
Headteacher	Philippa Maleney
Date of previous school inspection	26 May 2010
Telephone number	01697 746237
Fax number	01697 746237
Email address	mandy.davidson@hallbankgate.org.uk

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