

Armathwaite Primary School

Armathwaite, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA4 9PW

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 and achieve well. Pupils in Year 5 are working at levels that exceed those expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan their lessons to make sure all pupils are given work that brings the best out of them.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attendance is above average. They say they feel very safe and secure in school.
- The headteacher is ambitious for staff and pupils and provides a clear educational direction for the school. The procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are good. They enable leaders to prioritise the correct areas for development. The governing body knows the school's strengths and weaknesses and is fully involved in helping it to move forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' quick mental recall skills in mathematics are not well developed and they lack confidence in using them to solve number problems.
- Marking is not used consistently by teachers to show pupils the precise areas which need to be improved.
- The checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching do not then provide teachers with guidance about the specific areas in need of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons taught by three teachers. One of these was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the vice-chair of the governing body, parents, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. The inspector listened to groups of pupils read.
- Account was taken of the 26 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection.

Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Armathwaite is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Previously a first school, it was granted full primary status in July 2011 and now includes pupils from Reception to Year 5. From September 2013 it will include Year 6 pupils.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils whose parents are in the armed forces, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- It has gained a number of national awards, including the Activemark, and holds Healthy School status.
- The privately managed, on-site nursery provision is subject to a separate inspection and the report published on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve pupils' quick mental recall skills in mathematics and their ability to use these to solve number problems by:
 - ensuring lessons which develop these skills are fast paced
 - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise them by solving number problems in different subjects.
- Ensure when teachers mark pupils' work, that they consistently provide pupils with guidance on precisely how to improve their work.
- Ensure the checks made by school leaders on the quality of teaching provide teachers with guidance about the specific areas in need of improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their skill level on entering school, which is generally typical for their age. They make good progress and their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 5 are working at levels beyond those expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are confident in making choices for themselves. They work and play together well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing fairly. Children show enjoyment in all they do, such as in a mathematical activity when they were exploring the properties of different solid shapes.
- Through the rest of the school, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to get on with their work. They keep going when faced with difficulty and collaborate well to complete tasks. Pupils especially enjoy practical activities and are good at working out things for themselves.
- Pupils read widely at school and home, being enthusiastic when talking about their favourite books and authors. Attainment in reading is above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and exceeds the level expected for Year 5 pupils.
- Increasing numbers of pupils are making exceptional progress in writing. Their writing in a variety of styles, including narrative and poetry, is imaginative and successfully captures and maintains the attention of the reader. Pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is accurate and their handwriting is neat.
- In mathematics, pupils' quick mental recall skills are not as well developed as other aspects of the subject and they lack confidence in using them to solve problems. Nevertheless, they concentrate well and are keen to do better.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their specific needs are identified early and well-targeted extra support provided to ensure that they are met.
- The funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been used effectively to raise their attainment so that it is similar to that of other pupils. It has enabled the school to provide individual and small group teaching and this has been particularly successful in improving their reading and writing skills. Consequently, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults work well together to meet children's individual needs. They provide activities that are practical, interesting and successful in moving children's learning and development forward. The good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children contributes well to their ability to work by themselves.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to find out what pupils know and to deepen their understanding of what they are learning. Teachers effectively use information about how well pupils have learned to help them plan future lessons. As a result, pupils are able to use what they already know to support their current learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with tasks that have more than one outcome. This encourages pupils to work on their own or with others to work things out independently of the teacher. The conclusion to lessons is used well to enable pupils to draw together their findings and explain these to others.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not consistently provide guidance which indicates precisely how they could do better. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils, particularly disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils supported by the pupil premium.

- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted well by opportunities for them to learn about the world around them and by the high expectations of staff regarding behaviour. Social and cultural development is fostered by the many opportunities to work together and to learn about cultures different to their own.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication and technology to further pupils' learning. This was seen in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, in which they were encouraged to use computers to investigate and interpret information from tables and graphs. This enabled them to extend their understanding of positive and negative integers in relation to temperature changes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely well behaved, polite and courteous. They show a great appreciation of the views and ideas of others, such as in the weekly, whole-school-issues assemblies. Pupils are very considerate and willing to provide help to others when needed.
- Staff, parents and pupils say that behaviour has been exemplary over time and this is confirmed by the school's behaviour logs. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different kinds of bullying, such as physical, cyber and name-calling. They say that such events seldom occur and are very confident that staff would deal with them quickly if they did.
- Pupils have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They know about the dangers related to road, railway and waterways and what they need to do if approached by a stranger. The curriculum is planned effectively to deepen pupils' understanding of such issues.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown by their consistently above average attendance and the way in which they arrive at school on time. They say that the school is a, 'great place in which to learn and are really happy that they will be able to go into Year 6, rather than going to a different school'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher 'leads by example' and inspires all staff to do their best. Leaders and the governing body show determination in making improvements. Their success is shown by the way the curriculum has been effectively developed to meet the needs of pupils in Years 4 and 5 and in their effective planning for when the school incorporates Year 6 pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the management of staff performance and the training of teachers and other adults is effective in meeting whole-school and individual staff needs. There is a good link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is good. Leaders check carefully the progress of different groups to identify if any of them require extra support. This is exemplified in the way pupil premium funding has been used effectively to raise their achievement, especially in reading and writing.
- The school's leadership has shown it is capable of continuing to make improvements. The local authority provides light touch support, having confidence in the ability of leadership to take the school forward.
- The good curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular activities and educational visits. For example, during the inspection pupils in Years 4 and 5 visited Salkeld Watermill as part of their design and technology studies. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school engages effectively with parents and ensures they are well informed about their children's progress. All staff show high levels of respect and courtesy for pupils and others. This makes a positive contribution to the very friendly and welcoming atmosphere that is evident throughout the school.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body knows about data, has an accurate view of the school's performance and the quality of teaching and knows how the management of performance is used to improve staff expertise and reward good teaching. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in helping it improve. They take part in regular training to maintain their effectiveness, such as in safeguarding procedures. They manage the budget effectively and hold the school to account for the way the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement. The governing body ensures safeguarding requirements are met so that staff and pupils are safe.

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	112102
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	400197

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	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Robinson
Headteacher	Helen Hepworth
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2007
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