

Orton CofE School

Orton, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 3RG

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

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.

- The school has improved strongly since the previous inspection as a result of resolute, strong leadership and management by the headteacher.
- The school provides a welcoming, caring and very friendly environment where everyone is treated equally.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well in response to good teaching.
- Pupils enjoy school, as demonstrated by their above-average attendance. Their behaviour is outstanding and they have a very good awareness of the importance of being safe.
- The governing body provides good support to the school and asks searching questions about its work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Middle leaders are not effectively involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- While there are some very good opportunities for pupils to work on their own, at times there is an element of over-direction by teachers.
- Despite good improvements, pupils are not consistently given opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- At times the pointers given to children about what they need in order to improve their writing [success criteria] are too complex.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons. The headteacher took part in a joint observation of teaching with the inspector. Additional short visits in lessons were carried out to look at issues such as how well pupils get on with their classmates and how well they behave.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random, members of the governing body and with senior staff. The inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoy and why.
- Pupils' current work and assessment data were scrutinised, including information which showed how well pupils do in English and mathematics.
- Nineteen responses were received to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The school had carried out its own surveys of parents' views and this information was taken into account during the inspection. Discussions were also held with parents.
- Most members of staff completed the voluntary staff questionnaire and these responses were taken into account.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. There are no disabled pupils in the school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding (in this school this supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and thus raise pupils' achievements further by:
 - building on the good start already made in providing pupils with plenty of challenging opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in topic work and other subjects as well as English
 - ensuring written guidance on what pupils need to include in the work is readily understandable and not over-long.
 - extending learning opportunities further for pupils to work things out for themselves
 - ensuring consistency in marking
 - involving middle leaders more in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are typical of those expected for their age. However, the very small number of pupils in each age group means there is some variability in outcomes from year to year. They settle quickly into school routines and make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This is because the activities they take part in are interesting and enjoyable. For example, children were asked to identify what items were present and which were missing from a tray of objects, in response to the teacher sounding out the names of items. This enjoyable activity engaged them well in developing their understanding of how to sound out words. In the outside area a wide range of activities engage children very well in developing their independent learning, despite the sub-zero temperature!
- In Years 1 to 6 learning and progress continues to be good as a result of good and, at times, outstanding teaching. The school looks at pupils' individual needs and ensures that the work they are asked to do is at the right level. While pupils are now making better progress in writing there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply their writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum. This contrasts with the very good opportunities provided for pupils to use their reading skills. When given the opportunity, pupils are able to sort out the work they are asked to do for themselves. However, at times the success criteria provided are too complex and over-long, especially for younger pupils. As a result, these inappropriate success criteria hinder pupils' learning rather than helping it.
- Very small cohorts of pupils mean that test data need treating with care. However, by the time pupils leave Year 6 they achieve above-average test results in English and mathematics overall. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work and the school's own assessments demonstrate that current attainment is also above average. More-able pupils are given very challenging work that makes them think hard. For example, one pupil very confidently showed the inspector, using a self-designed spread sheet, how they had applied correctly the varying VAT percentages to work out the school's actual running costs.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read widely with confidence and enjoyment. They can talk confidently about what they like and dislike and why. By the end of both key stages attainment in reading is above average. Letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are taught well, with teaching assistants providing highly effective support. Pupils are able to read words with difficult spellings.
- The school makes good use of the extra money from pupil premium funding to enhance the learning opportunities of the pupils. This includes, where required, pupils being given additional support in class or in withdrawal groups. As a result, these pupils make the same good progress as others both in English and in mathematics. They attain standards which are above those seen nationally, including for pupils not receiving the additional funding.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils because they receive good-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make, with some travelling a long way to bring their children to the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching was judged to be satisfactory in the previous inspection. It has improved considerably and is now good with some teaching judged outstanding. The key factor in bringing about improvement is the clarity of data the school now has for pupils' progress. These data, along with teachers' and teaching assistants' excellent understanding of pupils' personal needs, are used well in setting challenging work for pupils to do. Teachers place a great emphasis on using questioning to establish what pupils have learnt and then question further to move their learning forward.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning and pupils respond well.

- Very good use is made of teaching assistants in supporting pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.
- In an outstanding lesson seen the variety of activities provided for pupils from four different age groups were very well matched to pupils' needs. The teacher moved around the classroom and expertly questioned groups of pupils about the work they were doing relating to understanding fractions in mathematics. Where teaching is not quite as successful, there is an element of over-direction rather than letting some pupils work things out for themselves. Relationships are outstanding and this results in pupils wanting to produce their very best work. One pupil commented to the inspector that in 'her' school 'everybody does their very best'.
- A good feature in marking is that pupils respond and improve their work. However, the school rightly recognises that marking is not used consistently well.
- Reading is very well taught throughout the school. Pupils say they enjoy reading and are keen to talk about what they like to read.
- Teachers provide plentiful opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills in meaningful contexts in a range of subjects.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceedingly well. The school grounds are very attractive and, along with the surrounding area, help pupils appreciate the wonders of nature. Visits to place of interest and residential visits broaden pupils' understanding.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection believe the quality of teaching is good, as do the pupils who spoke with the inspector.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- In this rural, small village school pupils get on exceptionally well with each other and with the staff. This is a key factor in ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- All parents are sure that the school provides a safe environment and that pupils enjoy school and behave very well.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. This is because children are taught from a very early age that how they behave is so very important. Pupils are unfailingly polite and are eager to share their many experiences about school. For example, they talk with tremendous enthusiasm about their involvement in the Jubilee garden project. Pupils are very proud of their school.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection demonstrates that behaviour over time is very good. Isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with very well.
- Pupils are highly confident and want to achieve well. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They respond extremely well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include being playground buddies, being a member of the school council or generally helping out around the school. During the inspection the pride pupils displayed in playing their musical instrument during assembly was a pleasure to see.
- Pupils are given the responsibility of choosing a pupil of the week. More than that, they discuss amongst themselves the reasons why someone should be chosen.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school can be seen in their above-average attendance and the punctual way they arrive at the start of the day.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying. They are confident that, should any ever occur, adults would deal with it quickly, fairly and firmly.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They recognise dangers when using the internet and know how to avoid these problems.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear view of how successful the school can be and shares this effectively with staff and governors. Procedures for checking how well the school is doing are accurate. The school improvement plan has a good focus on the right issues that could be improved further. Actions are clear and closely linked to raising attainment.
- The very successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development plays a key part in everything the school sets out to do. It results in a very caring school ethos. The attention given, for example, to improving the school building and in ensuring the school's grounds are very attractive and very well cared for are important factors in helping to ensure the very best learning environment for all pupils.
- Close checking on teaching has raised the quality of teaching, with only a few variations between classes. Teachers are set targets to improve their work and meetings are held to check on pupils' progress in their classes. As a result, both teaching and progress have improved. While middle leaders carry out their duties very well, these currently do not include looking at the actual quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Consequently, some opportunities to improve teaching even further are missed.
- Training for teachers focuses on improving pupils' individual skills. For example, a recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills is proving to be successful and the teaching of letters and sounds is now a strength of the school. The staff questionnaires indicate that staff think highly about the leadership of the school and of the provision made for their professional development.
- Leaders ensure that no pupils, regardless of background or need, are denied access to anything the school has to offer. Equal opportunities are provided for all pupils.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority and are exemplary. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met.
- The curriculum ensures pupils experience an imaginative range of topics. For example, pupils are proud to talk about the topic they have completed. Pupils say they enjoy lessons, especially the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. For example, almost half of Key Stage 2 pupils are learning to play a musical instrument
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. The governing body discharges its legal responsibilities well. The safeguarding of pupils is a high priority and governors ensure that the implementation of all policies in this respect is robust. They keep a close check on the school's budget and make sure that pupil premium funding is used to good effect for the purpose intended. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. Individual governors are linked to subject areas. They use the school assessment data well to judge the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Governors have a good understanding of how performance management is carried out. They seek assurance that, where appropriate in this small school, salary levels are closely linked to performance.

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	112419
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	405392

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Seed
Headteacher	Kate Arnold
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2011
Telephone number	01539 624268
Fax number	01539 624268
Email address	head@orton.cumbria.sch.uk

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