

# Bewcastle School

Bewcastle, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA6 9PF

**Inspection dates** 19–20 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
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

- While leaders have an understanding of how to improve the school, they do not check carefully enough that their actions are making improvements to pupils' learning.
- Assessment information is not always used well enough by teachers and leaders to provide a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making.
- Not enough is done by school leaders to check that teachers are meeting the learning needs of all pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Although supportive of the school, governors are not clear enough about what requires improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good and in most cases leads to good progress. There are many interesting activities in lessons which the pupils enjoy. They are involved in whole-school topics that capture their imaginations. These are successfully used to further develop their numeracy and, in particular, their literacy, skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs make consistently good progress because they are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants who know them well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is promoted extremely well through the curriculum and a range of well-considered and well-planned activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is at least good. Pupils are respectful towards each other and towards staff and visitors to the school. Parents are highly supportive of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed both teachers and visited four lessons. In addition, a number of short visits were made to other lessons to examine pupils' books to obtain a view of their achievement and progress over time. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, and members of the governing body.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, data on pupils' progress, curriculum plans, records relating to attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) prior to or during the inspection. The lead inspector took note of the school's most recent survey of parent views and those of the three staff who returned inspection questionnaires.

## Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools and serves an isolated area of northern Cumbria, close to the Scottish border.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional government funding, is below the national average.
- All pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - monitoring how effectively teachers plan lessons and track pupils' progress to set work at the right level for pupils of all abilities
  - improving teachers' marking so that pupils understand clearly how to make their work better.
- Ensure that leaders and governors have the skills to drive improvements in pupils' learning and progress by
  - making accurate checks on teachers' performance and providing them with clear targets so they are held directly accountable for the progress made by pupils
  - making better use of data so that teachers check regularly the progress pupils are making in their classes and how it can be improved
  - taking part and responding to an external review of governance to identify what support and training governors need.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are expected for their age, although this varies from year-to-year because of the small numbers of pupils within each year group. Children make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- Children of Reception class age settle well into school life as a result of very effective transition arrangements between school and home and also because the older pupils in the school are very caring and helpful towards the younger ones. Children quickly develop an understanding of how to play and learn well together.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school, and standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils enjoy reading and they are encouraged to practise their reading skills at home as well as in school. As a result of effective teaching, pupils are able to link letters and sounds to work out unfamiliar words. They talk enthusiastically and demonstrate good understanding of the stories they have read. When speaking with the lead inspector a number of younger pupils insisted enthusiastically that they had, 'already read over 1,000 books'. Older pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of reading to give them a good start in life.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels of attainment in writing is above average and pupils are encouraged to apply their imaginations and writing skills to create extended pieces of writing across other subjects through their topic work.
- Progress in mathematics for Year 6 pupils in 2012 was below expectations, but inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are making better progress as the result of additional support from teaching assistants and an external consultant. Although their attainment is in line with national expectations they do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English.
- As a result of early identification, and the very good provision made for them, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress against their starting points. The pupil premium is used effectively through the additional support provided by additional teaching assistants who play a very effective role in supporting individuals and small groups of pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Teachers plan activities effectively in the mixed-age classes to build on their previous learning, taking account of pupils' interests and needs. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and in the best lessons learning moves on at a good pace with many opportunities for pupils to work on their own and in small groups.
- In the best lessons, tasks are challenging and the pupils are totally absorbed in their work. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson on the meaning of aboriginal art, pupils of all ages and abilities contributed to a discussion skilfully guided by the teacher and by responding enthusiastically to questions, enjoying the opportunity to put forward their views. However, some lessons lack the challenge required to bring about good or better progress for all pupils and especially for the more-able.
- Teachers' marking generally praises pupils' efforts and in the best examples guidance is given to pupils about how their work can be improved further. However, the quality of feedback is variable and does not always clarify why the work was good, or check that pupils have acted upon previous guidance successfully. Pupils are not always given enough direction about how to improve their work and move from one level to the next.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is good teaching of how to link sounds and letters, develop writing and increase mathematical understanding. There is a wide range of engaging activities, both indoors and outdoors, which help children to enjoy, and make good progress in,

all aspects of their learning

- Teaching assistants are very well trained and adept at supporting individuals and groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They work closely with teachers to raise achievement by providing very good support and care for all pupils.
- Teaching makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in supporting them in reflecting, working well together and listening attentively to others.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school places children at the centre of all it does and has very high expectations of how well they conduct themselves. It provides a caring, supportive environment where pupils behave exceptionally well and show respect for themselves, each other and adults. Pupils are very proud of their school and love being there. Parents and pupils value the warm and welcoming ethos of the school, which is at the heart of its community.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They feel very safe in school and enjoy being in a small school where everyone knows everyone else. They say there is no bullying and that staff or older pupils are there to help sort out any small disputes that might arise. Older pupils help younger ones in lessons and in playing safely outside and talk enthusiastically about all the ways they help around the school. They are proud to be asked and carry out their duties and do so in a highly responsible manner.
- Pupils with additional learning, health and emotional needs are supported very well; this helps them to access everything that the school provides and make excellent progress in their learning and their personal development.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe when they go on trips and residential visits and are aware of some of the safety issues when using the internet. The school does not, however, provide effective e-safety instruction and pupils are unaware of the potential dangers of accessing social networking sites.
- Parents' comments and responses in questionnaires show that they have full confidence in the care and safety the school provides for their children. Parents and pupils have very positive attitudes to all that the school has to offer. This is reflected in the above-average levels of attendance for the majority of pupils.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- While leaders are clear about what needs to be done to drive improvement, and have made some important decisions about what is required, they are over optimistic about what has been achieved. They do not always check carefully enough on the actions they have taken and whether these are leading to improvements in teaching and learning. For example, leaders do not review pupils' progress frequently enough so that shortfalls in pupils' learning can be spotted and tackled quickly.
- Pupils enjoy the creative and stimulating range of subjects taught, which provides them with opportunities for learning both within the school and beyond. This is enhanced by an impressive range of other activities, including residential visits which contribute well to the standards they achieve and their personal development. However, not all subjects, other than English and mathematics, are taught in sufficient depth.
- Pupil-premium funding has been spent mainly on providing support for individuals and small-groups in reading, writing and mathematics. This has helped these pupils to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is reflected in their exemplary behaviour, the positive relationships they develop, and in their care and consideration for others in their local and the wider community.

- Checks on teachers' performance do not hold them directly accountable for the progress made by pupils.
- Safeguarding procedures and policies meet government requirements and adequate staff training is in place. Pupils understand how to stay safe.
- Support from the local authority has been 'light touch' and the school has not received a formal visit for well over a year. However, the authority has recently planned to provide training for members of the governing body and has been actively involved in the appointment of the new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are highly supportive but have relied too much on the headteacher to set the educational direction of the school. With the recent support of the local authority, governors are only now beginning to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to enable them to challenge school leaders and to understand the school's performance. During the inspection the lead inspector noted that a significant health and safety issue, reported by an external consultant to the governors some time ago, had not been acted upon. The inspector reported this to the governors and the local authority and ensured that the issue was fully addressed before he left the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112103
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	411726

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Billy Nelson
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01697 748662
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