

Lorton School

High Lorton, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9UL

Inspection dates 21–22 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 in all year groups achieve well in English and mathematics, both of which are consistently well taught. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary education.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Staff have high expectations and plan work which meets the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils. They use an effective range of methods to interest and motivate pupils.
- School leaders work closely with parents, involving them in the learning and progress of their children. Parents are extremely complimentary about the school.
- School leaders have a clear vision for improvement. This is impacting positively on the quality of teaching, with pupils' achievement also improving.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are confident, kind to each other and respectful to their teachers and other members of staff. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents and staff think that bullying is very rare.
- Pupils are provided with creative ways of learning and have regular opportunities to improve their skills through activities linked to science, art, music and technology.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While teaching is good, not enough is outstanding.
- Not all pupils are clear about their next steps in learning and how to improve their work.
- Governors do not make sufficient use of information to check the progress being made towards the school's agreed targets.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons taught by five teachers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the school adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He examined the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety and behaviour logs, school policies and a range of pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of 28 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- The inspector also examined questionnaire responses from 10 members of staff.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lorton Primary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, both through support at school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school teaches seven year groups in three classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and from Key Stage 1 are taught in one class.
- Pupils are educated on site. There is no alternative provision elsewhere.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by checking that every learner knows how to improve their work and clearly understands their next steps in learning.
- Increase the capacity of the governing body to regularly check the school's performance by monitoring progress towards targets, so that early action can be taken to remedy any slowing in rates of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding which are broadly typical of children of their age. They make good progress in all areas of their learning because of the rich variety of learning experiences they are provided with and the friendly caring environment. By the time they begin Key Stage 1 the large majority have acquired the routines to learn and play with others successfully and have developed their early literacy and numeracy skills well.
- Over the last five years the attainment of pupils leaving the school has generally been above average in English and mathematics, although this has fluctuated as a result of small numbers of pupils in different cohorts. As a result of good teaching, all groups of pupils are now making good progress. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully developed their ability to retell a known fable and worked very effectively to incorporate speech and drama into their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also demonstrated good mathematical understanding when challenged with a problem related to the rotation of shapes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well from their starting points. School leaders arrange individual support and care programmes which enhance these pupils' well-being as well as their learning.
- In national tests in 2012 the attainment in English and mathematics of the very small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was approximately four terms behind that of all other pupils in the school. Inspection evidence indicates that this gap has now been closed as a result of pupils currently eligible for free school meals having made good progress.
- In lessons pupils make good progress because they are interested in learning and behave extremely well. They are confident learners who work together effectively and try hard with their work, responding well to the imaginative range of learning opportunities provided. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 went into the playground with their teacher to take part in role play related to Theseus and the Minotaur in order to prepare them for a writing lesson.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. The high expectations of staff enable all groups of pupils to achieve equally well. Teachers enable pupils to be confident learners. Their questioning techniques enable pupils to develop their ability to think. Lessons are fun, engaging and develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and communication.
- Planning is typically strong across all year groups, taking into account the needs of mixed-age classes. This ensures there is a good match between the tasks set and pupils' differing needs, aptitudes and abilities.
- Teachers are creative in using a range of strategies to engage, motivate and stretch pupils. In a very successful Year 1 and 2 phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make) lesson seen during the inspection, pupils responded very positively to the task of using brushes and pots of water to paint the key sounds in chosen words on the playground.
- Where teaching is outstanding the pace of learning is extremely well matched to the needs of all the pupils. As a result, the progress made is excellent. This occurs most frequently in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching engages and motivates pupils because teachers and teaching assistants make the learning exciting through resources such as games and information and communication technology. This builds on the very strong relationships that exist at all levels in the school.
- Support staff are well deployed. Their teaching is invariably good and particularly effective in supporting pupils with additional needs. As a consequence, lower-ability pupils and those with additional educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, displays around the school, which stimulate interest and inspire vibrant learning, show

how pupils learn about different aspects of the curriculum. All classrooms have learning displays that support learning of key vocabulary and numeracy skills.

- Books are marked regularly and assessments are accurate. While the large majority of work is corrected, teachers do not always provide information that clearly tells pupils how to improve their work and, when they do, pupils rarely respond to these prompts. As a result, too many pupils do not know what their next steps in learning are. This is a key reason why the impact of teaching on pupil achievement is not yet outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Teachers and all other members of staff are keen to praise and encourage pupils. Any isolated incidents of low-level disruption are managed very well. As a result, pupils are kind, mature and confident in dealing with each other and with adults. Pupils talk about their school with great enthusiasm, describe it as 'a great place' and confirm that behaviour is always very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are always keen to do their best and they are able to use a variety of skills which help them to further their learning.
- Attendance is broadly average and pupils are punctual to lessons. They enjoy being in school and talk about it as a 'fun place to be' because they enjoy learning. These views are particularly strongly expressed by the comparatively large number of pupils who have joined the school at various points more recently.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare and demonstrate that they know how to keep themselves safe from bullying. They have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying and treat each other with a great deal of respect. This is demonstrated at breaktimes and lunchtimes when pupils of differing ages play harmoniously using the wide range of equipment available.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and conscientiously support their peers where they can. For example, they are keen to take up roles as playground buddies or assembly or playtime equipment monitors. Pupils express themselves confidently and say they feel lucky to be able to attend this school.
- Regular opportunities to celebrate and take part in many activities in sports, the arts, music and team-building make the school a popular place. Pupils contribute to their community by the annual 'Giving Back Week' in the summer term, which pupils talk about enthusiastically.
- Parents and staff rightly believe that pupils behave exceptionally well. The school works closely with parents, who praise the school and are happy that their children are safe and making good progress.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a well-respected role model within the school and she has successfully built a whole-school team of governors, staff and pupils that work closely and effectively together. It is this 'whole-schoolness' that is a key factor in this school's success.
- Senior leaders are accurate in their evaluation of how much the school is improving and what they need to do next to ensure there is further improvement. They give teachers, parents and pupils confidence and pride in the school through regular communication of high expectations for what pupils can achieve in their learning and the progress they can make.
- There are processes in place that ensure that teachers' pay and promotion within the school are closely linked to good outcomes for pupils. Lesson observations are regular, leading in the main to an accurate understanding of the impact of the quality of teaching on pupils' progress. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that teachers' marking and feedback to pupils consistently lead to improvement.
- The local authority checks the school's self-evaluation judgements and documentation and has confidence in its accuracy. As the local authority judges the school to be doing well, it has not

felt it necessary to provide much support.

- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the coordination of special educational needs support are strong, resulting in good provision. Planning is individualised to meet the particular needs of each pupil and a close check is kept on their individual progress. Support staff are well deployed.
- Safeguarding arrangements comply with regulations. Leaders and managers ensure that all staff recruited are checked for their suitability to work with children. They identify and respond well to concerns regarding children's welfare.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of taught and extra-curricular activities, including educational visits, visitors and residential visits. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of all learners, a fact appreciated by pupils. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 said that they particularly enjoy the group music tuition.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the headteacher and other staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Governors support the priority of pupils making good progress at all levels and discuss this with the headteacher and staff. However, the monitoring by governors of progress towards the school's agreed targets is not frequent or in-depth enough and, as a result, they are not able to spot any trends in underperformance and then support and challenge the school in taking early remedial action. Governors make sure that teachers' performance is assessed carefully and they check that rewards and pay are justified by each teacher's performance in enabling pupils to make good progress. The governing body allocates pupil premium funding effectively so that eligible pupils make good progress. It has managed the budget efficiently and prudently in recent years when its resources have diminished and is now working closely with the headteacher in planning the reorganisation of the class structure as a result of the school's deserved increasing popularity. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities well, ensuring that all current safeguarding requirements are met. Equality of opportunity is vigorously promoted and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

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	112133
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	403169

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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Hughes
Headteacher	Olivia Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2007
Telephone number	01900 85919
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