

Low Furness CofE Primary School

Church Road, Great Urswick, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 0TA

Inspection dates 26–27 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.

- Pupils are exceptionally well motivated. They bring enthusiasm and initiative to their learning. They take a pride in themselves and in their school.
- Pupils are mature for their years. They get on well together but understand how a thoughtless remark could cause upset. They feel very happy and safe in the school and know that they are well looked after.
- Children get off to a very good start in the Nursery and Reception years. Reception children develop their speaking, reading and writing skills rapidly.
- Nearly all lessons seen had teaching that was at least good and in nearly half it was outstanding. There was no inadequate teaching.
- Achievement is improving. In 2012 Year 6 pupils had results that were much better than in 2011. All pupils reached at least expected levels and over half did better. Progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was exceptionally strong.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's leadership has brought about strong improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in recent years. She is acutely aware of the strengths and areas for development in teachers' work. She is well supported by staff and morale in the school is high. Parents greatly appreciate all that the school does.
- Governors are strongly committed to their work. They are well-informed and steer the school's development with perceptive firmness. Financial management is very secure.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More-able pupils in Key Stage 1 do not do as well as they should.
- While marking is generally thorough and helpful, pupils do not always act on the corrections and advice that teachers put in their books.
- Pupils generally make steady and sometimes very strong progress, but records of the progress they make are not always reliable.
- Each teacher is observed teaching several times a year, but there is a need for closer checking and more detailed advice where teaching is in need of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, and teaching was seen in all classrooms. Two lessons had shared observations with the headteacher. In addition, brief visits were made to several classrooms.
- Meetings were held with five members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. The inspector also held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders and a group of pupils.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils' work in the current year, data on pupils' achievements in national assessments, information on pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- The 46 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, together with letters received from parents. There were 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is less than half that found nationally; in some year groups there are no pupils eligible. (Pupil premium is additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or whose families are in the armed forces). The school has no pupils in the care of the local authority, a very small number from armed services families and a small number who are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as 'school action' is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at 'school action plus', or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- At present, all four classes have pupils from two year groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has joined the school since the previous inspection. The school does not have a deputy headteacher. Since the beginning of 2012 two part-time staff have shared the position of senior teacher.
- The school has a before-school and after-school care club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further by:
 - providing better opportunities for more-able pupils to make progress in Key Stage 1, particularly with writing
 - ensuring that pupils always build on the advice they receive through teachers' diligent marking of work in literacy and numeracy, and enhancing the level of marking in some pupils' topic work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the reliability of the records of pupils' progress as they move through the school
 - providing better checks and more guidance for teachers where teaching is sometimes in need of improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is improving; it is good overall. Some outstanding progress was seen during lessons in three classrooms. Occasionally, pupils do not make quite as much headway as they might, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Young children join the Nursery with skills and capabilities that the school has assessed as broadly similar to those expected for their age. They quickly learn to act on instructions and collaborate with one another. A third of children in Reception have developed early writing and reading that is more typical of Year 1. When pupils start Key Stage 1 they have a range of capabilities that are above average.
- Many pupils make sound and sometimes good progress in Key Stage 1. Effective development of pupils' understanding of the sounds that combinations of letters make is now supporting good progress with reading, though some remain uncertain about converting sounds into spelling. Standards have been fairly steady for several years. In 2012 standards in Year 2 were slightly above average in reading, writing and mathematics, highest in mathematics and weakest in writing. However, the proportion reaching the highest levels is lower than nationally, significantly so with writing. Some more-able Year 2 pupils write too many words that are indecipherable.
- Most pupils make excellent progress in Key Stage 2. They generally develop very effective learning habits. Work is well presented. Topic books show admirable research and collaborative skills. Some learn well from comments that teachers make in their books. For instance, a Year 4 pupil understood the slips pointed out a fortnight earlier with column addition and subtraction, and could do similar sums competently. However, where spellings had been corrected only half of Year 6 pupils had mastered the correct spelling.
- Reading is a major strength. Some Year 4 pupils can read with fluency and understanding more typical of Year 6 and weaker pupils in that year have standards that are normal for their age. Confidence, competence and enthusiasm for reading underpin the successful learning across the curriculum.
- Standards in Year 6 in 2012 were high. All pupils reached at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading was exceptionally strong, with three quarters exceeding expected standards in national tests. Overall, pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was rated as in the top 13% nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make progress that is at least as good as that of others.
- There were no pupils entitled to pupil premium funding in the data for Key Stage 2 in 2012. The school's data on pupils' attainment and progress and the inspector's observations of their work in lessons show that the very small number from armed services families and the few who are eligible for free school meals are doing well and in some cases better than others in their class.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall and a significant amount is outstanding; none is inadequate. Occasionally, there are instances of teaching that require improvement.
- Well-organised opportunities for nursery and reception children enable them to become independent quickly. They soon gain impressive communication skills. As they acted out the story of *Rapunzel and the Prince*, they relished the irony of the anti-climax in the new ending: the prince loses his glasses and Rapunzel finds them for him!
- Teachers generally have high expectations. They waste no time in getting learning underway. Tasks and support from adults are well adjusted to pupils' capabilities and potential. Teachers' questions are well targeted; pupils are put on the spot and expected to come up with correct responses. Lessons are well planned with activities that capture pupils' interest and that are apposite for the intended learning. Separation of 32 chocolate sweets into three piles quickly

established the notion of division and remainder for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Appropriate homework tasks are set, and some pupils benefit from suitable help with them at home.

- Occasionally, the introduction to the lesson takes too long. Younger pupils listened to the teacher for nearly half an hour while itching to get started on their own writing. Teachers do not always spot when pupils could be challenged more. For example, one who knew that $20 = 50 - 30$ might have been asked to figure out what has to be taken from 57 to make 20. With some more-able younger pupils attainment of higher standards in writing is limited because teaching is not sorting out serious spelling problems.
- Teaching assistants are skilful in the support they provide. They know the needs of individual pupils well. Their time is shared appropriately between disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and other groups in a class. Pupils entitled to the pupil premium are properly considered in assigning support. In the very large Year 5 and 6 class a higher-level teaching assistant is very effective in working with large groups of pupils withdrawn from the main classroom.
- Teachers are generally painstaking with marking, correcting simple errors and explaining, for instance, the concept of 'a paragraph'. Topic work is not always marked as closely. Pupils are reasonably conscientious in acting on corrections, but more could be done to ensure that they do.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils bring an earnest enthusiasm to their learning. Older pupils set themselves high standards. All the pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently presented a high-quality, well-researched and well-rehearsed assembly on the solar system and our place within it. They were a credit to themselves and to the school. Older pupils take a vigorous lead in the school council, eco-projects and in mentoring younger ones, for instance, with the dance club. They are looking forward to the school flagpole being put in order again; they are proud to be here.
- Pupils say that they get on with one another well and that friendships extend beyond year groups. They generally understand the need for caution with careless remarks: 'If I thought he was rubbish at football, I probably wouldn't say so to him; to others maybe.' They say that bullying is not a problem. They explain how they are careful with electronic communication systems. They are happy at school and value the care that it provides. Older pupils are learning how to look after themselves in the wider environment; they enjoy being in football and other clubs beyond school; they look forward to the Liverpool trip.
- Pupils are courteous and polite to everyone. They work well in pairs and in groups in the classroom and are very attentive. They offer cheery greetings to visitors and can be the personification of consideration, as when the rather gormless inspector was hit by a football, asking: 'Are you alright, Mr Inspector?'
- Attendance is well above average and pupils are punctual to school.

The leadership and management are good

- This is a greatly improved school. Teaching and achievement are much better than at the previous inspection. The headteacher has cultivated an ethos in which all staff are strongly committed to the school's work and where all take their part in making it a happy place. The headteacher and governors recognise that occasionally teaching requires improvement and that some management systems need reinforcement.
- There are detailed records of the regular checks made on teachers' work. Pertinent advice is given for improvement and suitable targets are set. Teachers have opportunities to improve their skills by training and visits to other schools. However, the headteacher has not yet put in hand enhanced checks on teaching and pupils' progress and the provision of good guidance where

teaching is known to need some improvement.

- While pupils are making good, and sometimes better, progress during most of their time at the school, records of progress do not always give a reliable picture. The dates when assessments were made are not clearly stated. Occasionally, recorded assessments are spuriously low and lower than is evident on looking over a pupil's work, but the apparent anomaly is not necessarily explored. Ongoing targets are not adjusted upwards where a pupil is making very strong progress. Records need refinement to focus more effectively arrangements to help any underachieving pupils and to sharpen the quality of the checks made on teaching.
 - The school is very well regarded by parents. Some made fulsome statements about the help their children have experienced. The school attaches importance to its Christian ethos and endeavours to be a caring community where there is never any suggestion of discrimination and all have equal chances to find success. Pupils' spiritual and wider personal development is engendered through a range of well-considered opportunities. The curriculum is good and developing through topics such as Australia and Extreme Earth.
 - The local authority has a clear impression of how things stand in the school. With continuing improvement it has, rightly, stood back to let things take shape.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to their work in improving the school. They are appropriately trained and understand data on pupils' progress. They have suitable committees for delegation of their responsibilities. There are proper systems for setting the headteacher's objectives. Governors are included in the consideration of teaching quality, teachers' performance management and the way these are related to teachers' pay. They ensure that specific funding allocations are spent efficiently and to proper purpose; their minutes of meetings detail the ways in which pupil premium funding is allocated. Finances have been put on a firmer footing. Governors are making well-conceived plans for contingencies as year groups of uneven size move through the school. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
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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	112299
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	401256

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Browne
Headteacher	Sue Little
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2010
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