

# Skelton School

Skelton, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 9SE

**Inspection dates** 19–20 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Skelton's mission to 'develop confident, capable learners in a caring community' is embedded across the school. All staff are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil thrives in both their academic achievement and personal development.
- Inspired by the adults around them, pupils develop a love of learning from a young age and this continues throughout their time at school. As a result, all pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium, have outstanding achievement.
- Outstanding teaching stimulates and supports pupils. Highly skilled and committed teachers, teaching assistants and visiting specialists work extremely well together to plan lessons that enthuse pupils.
- There are a wealth of opportunities both in school and beyond which stretches pupils' imaginations and broadens their horizons. This has a very positive impact on their motivation to learn.
- The rate of pupils' learning is meticulously and regularly checked. Teachers are highly skilled in providing support when the pace of learning is not swift enough.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are often exemplary. Their behaviour is impeccable in lessons, around the school, in the local community and during educational visits.
- The school is at the heart of village life. Pupils enthusiastically contribute to the school and wider community through the school council. They are proactive in organising events to raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves.
- Staff work really well as a team and together, with members of the governing body, volunteers and visitors they create an exceptional environment in which to learn. This contributes to pupils' extremely good preparation for the next stage in their education.
- Leadership and management, including the governing body, are outstanding. The quality of teaching is thoroughly checked and this has led to continuous improvement in pupils' achievement across all subjects over a sustained period.
- The headteacher acknowledges the benefits of increasing the opportunities for staff to observe outstanding teaching in other schools. This is to work towards a higher proportion of outstanding teaching and ensure the highest possible outcomes for all pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four teachers and visited nine lessons and part lessons, which included one joint observation with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, subject leaders, parents, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, reports of the school's checks on how well it is doing, development plans, local authority reports, records of pupils' current attainment and progress, documents relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour and pupils' work.
- There were two responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to the inspection. Twenty three responses were recorded during the inspection and were considered by the inspector.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below the national average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for children in local authority care, those from services families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school works with James Rennie Special School. This delivers alternative education to a few children and prepares them for a smooth transition to full-time education at the special school in September 2013.
- The school holds a number of awards including: Healthy School Status, Eco-Bronze, Fair Trade and Sing-Up Silver awards.
- A member of staff is an associate for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics and also a member of the National Curriculum Assessments Reference Group.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- A nursery and after-school clubs are held on the school site but are managed independently and subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

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

- Secure the highest possible outcomes for pupils by increasing further the proportion of outstanding teaching by giving even more opportunities for teachers to observe best practice in other schools.

## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** is outstanding

- Highly effective links between staff, parents and the Nurseries feeding into the school ensure that children settle very quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. From the day they start, the children learn to respect each other, the older ones in their class and the adults around them. They develop an eagerness to learn.
- Children join Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with those expected for their age although this does vary from year to year. The teacher and teaching assistant work very well together to ensure children have a stimulating environment in which to learn, both indoors and outdoors and this leads to outstanding progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. For several years, pupils' attainment and achievement have been well above the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make exceptional progress. This includes those who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. Those who join the school other than at the usual times also make outstanding progress.
- Attainment and achievement in English and mathematics are well above average by the time pupils leave school. This is the result of excellent teaching and tailored support for those who need extra help. A very small minority benefit from being educated at a special school to support their specific needs.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to other pupils at school and well above similar pupils nationally in English and in mathematics. The pupil premium grant is used to successfully narrow any gaps in the attainment of pupils in the receipt of the grant and those who are not. This demonstrates commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Staff are highly skilled in developing a keenness in pupils to read from a very young age. The pupils who read to the inspector demonstrated advanced skills to work out unfamiliar words by blending letters and sounds. They were keen to retell stories in their own words demonstrating their understanding of what they had read. By the time pupils leave school, they are extremely competent readers.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved and is now outstanding. This is as the result of the headteacher's relentless drive to raise standards. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly check on the progress of pupils and use this information to plan lessons that are precise in meeting individual pupils.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding because of extremely well-planned lessons which inspire pupils to find out things for themselves. They receive a wide range of stimulating activities that capture their imaginations and challenge them to think deeply. Mathematics and English, including reading, are taught extremely well.
- In a mathematics lesson, for example, Years 1 and 2 were introduced to Venn Diagrams to organise snowmen into different groups. Intentionally, the teacher kept placing the snowmen in the wrong group and the pupils found this very funny and were quick to point out the mistakes. When the teacher asked for help there was a spontaneous, 'I'd love to', from one pupil and the whole class responded with eagerness to the challenge. When they started on their individual work, they clearly understood the task and made rapid progress in their learning. The more-able were challenged with a range of difficult numbers to group and accurately explained the reasons for placing these in particular groups.
- In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils demonstrated a thorough understanding of the characters and the sequence of events in 'The Tempest'. They had been enthused by a visit to the theatre to see the play and then by their own rehearsal of scenes in class. The teacher was very skilled in

then prompting pupils to think about famous actors and members of the royal family. The pupils were encouraged to consider how such people speak, as a way of introducing the difference between formal and informal language. This captured the pupils' imaginations and led to rapid pace in their interpretation of parts of the play. Rapid progress in their learning resulted because of their engagement in such work.

- Pupils' books contain work which is very well presented and reflects the pride they take in their work. Teachers' marking ensures that pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

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

- From an early age, children learn how to value each other, the adults around them and their strong school community. One parent commented that 'children are caring and considerate and will always ensure that they are fair with each other'. This leads to pupils feeling happy, safe and secure and is reflected in their attendance which is well above average and their punctuality in the mornings, which is very good indeed. Pupils' excellent behaviour contributes to their learning in a safe and secure environment thereby adding to the quality of learning.
- A display in the school celebrates why the pupils think Skelton is great and includes comments such as, 'everyone's opinion is greatly valued', 'everyone does their best', and, 'we have fun and we do really exciting topic work'. One member of staff told the inspector: 'It's a joy to come to work...the children are great company'. This positive picture was reflected in conversations with pupils and their families, and from the vast majority of views expressed on Parent View.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and they are encouraged to be reflective in all that they say and do both in lessons and around the school. This is particularly poignant in the philosophy sessions in Key Stage 2.
- The older pupils are extremely mindful of the younger pupils and set a very good example by all that they say and do. In the daily, whole-school 'wake up, shake up,' three older pupils lead an exercise routine to music in the playground and then award house points to those making the most effort. This gets the school day off to a very good start.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying is not an issue at this school although they do learn about different types of bullying and, for example, how to stay safe when using the internet. The older pupils are preparing a presentation on the computer for a competition entitled 'Make IT Safe' which reinforces their understanding of e-safety. They are adamant that they could turn to any adult in the school if they felt unsafe and that there are clear procedures that would deal with issues should they arise.
- The pupils use their allotment to produce some of the food prepared for community lunches with local residents. This contributes to their understanding of healthy eating.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher has developed a whole-school team which is outstanding in promoting a shared ambition and determination that all pupils have maximum benefit from their education. All staff share the vision of the headteacher and are dedicated and committed to providing an all-round education for pupils. This enables pupils to reach their academic potential alongside developing their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural growth, which is at the heart of the school. As a result, the local authority's involvement with this school is 'light touch'.
- Exceptionally strong systems are in place for checking pupils' progress. This identifies any pupils at risk of falling behind so that swift action is taken to help them. This promotes equality of opportunity and ensures discrimination does not occur. There are effective links with other schools which benefit pupils.
- Transparent procedures are established to check on the quality of teaching and how well staff

meet their many areas of responsibility. All staff are well supported through training opportunities, although the headteacher acknowledges that the proportion of outstanding teaching could be increased even further by more opportunities to see outstanding practice in other schools. Staff are set challenging targets which are checked and linked directly to pay awards.

- The curriculum ensures that pupils learn through many and varied real-life experiences. A residential trip to Liverpool and a link with a school in Tanzania are examples of how pupils learn about life and cultures beyond their own experience and draw on this to enhance their learning and personal development.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body brings a breadth of expertise to the school and they regularly attend training to keep up to date. Governors are deeply committed to continually driving improvements at Skelton. They ensure that the school fulfils safeguarding requirements; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. The governing body has an accurate overview of the school's provision and its impact on achievement of pupils. Governors regularly challenge staff on pupils' progress compared to other schools by analysing data. They thoroughly check the link between new initiatives and the quality of teaching and monitor the achievement of pupils receiving pupil premium funding. This level of enquiry and accountability contributes enormously in shaping the long-term plans for the school based on how well pupils are progressing compared to other schools. They have also agreed the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that all pupils make outstanding progress, no matter when they start at Skelton.

## 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>	112121
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	403168

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>	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Athole McKillop
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Newman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01768 484367
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	admin@skelton.cumbria.sch.uk



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