

Rockcliffe CofE School

Rockcliffe, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA6 4AA

Inspection dates 1–2 May 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 they attain average standards in English and mathematics.
- By the time they leave the school pupils' attainment in reading is above average.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Classrooms are managed well so there is minimal loss of time for learning.
- Staff show respect for pupils and others.
- Pupils behave well, being polite and courteous. They say they feel safe in school at all times. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The curriculum provides effective opportunities for learning for all pupils.
- The headteacher has been at the forefront of the school's good improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors have worked successfully to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
- There are good procedures for assessing how well the school is doing and for identifying areas for further development.
- The actions taken to bring about improvement are checked carefully to see if they are proving successful.
- The governing body is ambitious for the school and fully involved in helping it to move forward.
- The school's ability to carry on making improvements is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and such practice is not shared systematically with other staff.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves.
- Teaching assistants are not always effectively deployed to promote pupils' learning.
- Pupils lack accuracy in using correct punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Pupils are not adept at rapid mental recall of number facts and in solving mathematical problems quickly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons taught by four teachers. Three of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, parents, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. The inspector listened to groups of pupils read.
- Account was taken of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in carrying out the inspection. Account was also taken of the responses to a recent school questionnaire sent to parents to gain their views about its performance.

Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rockcliffe is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is a part-time nursery which children attend in the afternoon.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in mixed-year-group classes.
- There is a below-average proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are too few pupils in Year 6 to provide meaningful statistics as to whether or not the school meets current government floor standards. These set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has gained a number of national awards, including the Activemark, and holds Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics to above the national average by:
 - improving pupils' ability to use punctuation, spelling and grammar accurately in their writing
 - improving pupils' rapid mental recall of number facts and their ability to use this to solve number problems in mathematics more quickly.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are always deployed effectively to promote pupils' learning
 - systematically sharing the outstanding practice evident in school with other staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school with skill levels that vary but which are generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress through the school and attain average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement.
- Attainment in reading is average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils effectively build on their reading skills as they pass through the school. This stems from the emphasis that teachers place on developing pupils' ability to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children show enjoyment in their activities and are keen to learn. They grow in confidence as they learn to make choices for themselves. Children take turns and share resources fairly, as evident when using the role-play area set up as a garden centre.
- In Years 1 to 6 pupils show enthusiasm and perseverance in their activities. They work well together and are respectful of the views and ideas of others. They are attentive, concentrate well and take pride in their work.
- Pupils' writing is creative, capturing and maintaining the reader's interest. Their handwriting is neat and their work presented well. However, pupils lack accuracy in constructing sentences with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- In mathematics pupils have secure calculation skills and collaborate well to complete tasks. This was evident when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were learning how to use coordinates to find different locations. Their rapid recall of number facts is not well developed and this slows the rate at which they can solve number problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is a result of their individual needs being identified early and well-targeted extra support being provided to meet them.
- Leaders have successfully used the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium to raise their attainment in English and mathematics. Small-group and individual support has been provided to accelerate the progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This demonstrates the school's successful promotion of equality of opportunity. Although their attainment in English and mathematics is lower than that of other pupils in school by about two terms, the gap between them is narrowing.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage adults work well as a team to meet children's individual needs. They provide interesting and practical activities that effectively develop children's knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning. The outdoor area is used well to build upon learning that has taken place indoors.
- In Years 1 to 6 teachers manage classrooms well to maximise pupils' learning. They use questioning successfully to find out what pupils know and to deepen their understanding. Teachers effectively use information about how well pupils have learned to help them plan future lessons.
- The quality of marking has been improved since the previous inspection. Teachers use it effectively to guide pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and so are able to explain new ideas clearly and confidently. Praise is used well by teachers to raise pupils' self-esteem and to encourage them to take pride in their work. Teachers expect the best from their pupils and they respond positively by getting on well with their work.
- In some lessons teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to work things out for themselves. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to promote pupils' learning.

This is particularly the case during the introductions to lessons.

- Outstanding teaching was characterised by pupils being given highly motivating activities that captured and maintained their interest and very effectively met their individual needs. Such teaching was observed in a numeracy lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in which they made excellent progress in their ability to work logically using numbers, and to write and use formulae to solve problems.
- Spiritual and moral development is promoted effectively by pupils being encouraged to reflect on the wonder of the world around them and by high expectations of their behaviour. Social and cultural development is fostered by pupils being given opportunity to work collaboratively and to explore the traditions and beliefs of cultures different from their own.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good behaviour contributes to the progress they make and to the friendly atmosphere that is evident throughout the school. They are proud of their school and are keen to learn. Pupils say they enjoy school because 'our lessons are interesting and learning is fun'.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different types of bullying, such as cyber and physical bullying, and say any such occurrences do not happen. They are confident that any bullying would be dealt with promptly by staff. The views of parents, staff and pupils and a scrutiny of behaviour logs confirm that behaviour has been good over time.
- There is a good understanding among pupils of how to keep themselves and others safe. This is effectively promoted through the curriculum by activities that highlight the dangers associated with the use of roads, railways, water and the internet. Pupils know what to do if approached by a stranger and agree that they feel safe in school at all times.
- Pupils say that occasionally some pupils do not behave as well as they could do in class but that teachers deal with this well.
- Pupils attend regularly and arrive at school on time. This ensures that there is no delay in starting activities.
- Pupils willingly take on a variety of responsibilities. Members of the school council take their role seriously and successfully give all pupils a voice in how the school develops. School councillors organise fundraising activities for a range of charities and have been instrumental in the provision of a wider range of outdoor play equipment for pupils to use.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear view of how good the school can be and works successfully with the assistant headteacher and governors to drive forward improvements. They successfully encourage all staff to do their best.
- The role of subject leaders has been successfully developed since the previous inspection. They have a good understanding of the quality of learning in their subjects through the school and are confident in taking action to bring about further improvement.
- The procedures for checking the quality of teaching are rigorous and have successfully brought about improvement since the previous inspection. Outstanding practice has been identified but not yet shared systematically with other staff in order to further develop their expertise.
- The arrangements for checking how well the school is doing are good and correctly identify areas for development. Planning for improvement has been refined so that targets are challenging and measurable in terms of how successful they are proving.
- The management of staff performance and training of teachers and other adults successfully meets whole-school and individual staff needs. There is a clear link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is good. Leaders check carefully the progress of different groups to identify if any of them require extra support.

Consequently, there is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups.

- The local authority provided good support after the previous inspection to help the school improve. It now provides light-touch support as it rightly has confidence in the ability of the school's leadership to continue making improvements.
- Staff show respect for pupils and other adults. Relationships at all levels are good and contribute positively to pupils' learning and development.
- The curriculum is planned well to interest pupils in learning and to promote effectively their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is enhanced by extra-curricular activities and visits, such as to the Science Museum in Glasgow.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. It has been improved since the previous inspection so that the governing body plays an effective role in helping the school move forward. Governors take part in relevant training to maintain their expertise and ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and how the management of performance is used to improve staff expertise, tackle underperformance and reward good teaching. The governing body manages the budget well and holds the school to account for the way the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement.

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	112258
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	401252

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	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Park
Headteacher	David Hodgkiss
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2009
Telephone number	01228 674631
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@rockcliffe.cumbria.sch.uk

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