

Plumpton School

Plumpton, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 9PA

Inspection dates

6–7 June 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 achieve well. Nearly all make the progress expected of them. The proportion of pupils that make better progress than this compares favourably to national figures.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs or who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress, and this shows the school's strong and effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The school prepares pupils well for future success.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers form very good relationships with pupils and track their progress accurately.
- The school provides outstandingly well for pupils' welfare and well-being. As a result, pupils feel exceptionally safe in school.
- Pupils behave outstandingly well. They get along exceptionally well with each other and with the adults that work with them.
- Many pupils comment that being in school is like being 'part of a big family'. They are very proud of their school.
- Leaders and managers, including a highly effective and committed governing body, have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where it could do even better.
- Teamwork is strong in the pursuit of improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Not enough pupils make better than the progress expected of them for their achievement to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons taught by four members of staff. Three of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also looked closely at a sample of pupils' written work in their exercise books. He also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and listened to a group of pupils read.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, a group of pupils and three representatives of the governing body. The inspector also spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of a wide range of documentation including: information on pupils' progress and attainment; the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and the development plan; school records relating to behaviour, safety and the monitoring of teaching and learning; minutes of the meetings of the governing body and reports from the school improvement officer.
- Inspectors took account of 32 responses to the online questionnaires (Parent View), as well as summaries of responses to questionnaires sent out by the school to parents. The inspector also took account of questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Plumpton School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is situated in a small, rural village on the edge of the Lake District.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- Very few pupils are known to be 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well-below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who join and/or leave the school at other than normal times is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and raise achievement further by ensuring that:
 - all teaching takes fully into account pupils' ages, needs and abilities to set activities that are at the right level and neither too hard nor too easy for some pupils
 - all teaching has enough pace and variety to push pupils' learning along at a fast pace.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Reception Year with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. They get off to an excellent start and make rapid progress because of the outstanding teaching and range of activities provided for them.
- By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. In writing, attainment has risen significantly because the school has focused successfully on improving pupils' writing skills.
- Nearly all pupils make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils that make better progress than this generally compares favourably to national figures. However, with a greater focus on ensuring that the work that they are given always challenges pupils appropriately, even more pupils could make better than expected progress.
- The few pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the effective support that they receive.
- There are too few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium to be of any statistical significance. In 2012, for example, only one pupil was known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- School data, supported by inspection evidence from lesson observations and pupils' work in their books, show that pupils who join the school at other than normal times also make good progress and achieve well.
- The good progress and achievement of all pupils shows the school's success in providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Above average attainment and good progress in both English and mathematics mean that pupils are well-prepared for their move to secondary education.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is successful in enabling pupils to make good and improving progress. Pupils say how much they enjoy reading. They read regularly both in school and at home.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is outstanding. It provides children with an exceptionally well-planned range of activities both indoors and outdoors. It matches activities closely to children's needs with an excellent range of stimulating activities both adult-led and child initiated.
- For example, in a joint session for Reception children together with Year 1 pupils on designing and making farm machinery, every child was fully engrossed in work. Some worked with the teacher reading and writing about tractors, while others worked very successfully in pairs and small groups figuring out how to use a range of materials to build models. The sense of enjoyment was exceptional as was the hard work every child put in to give of their very best.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and much teaching uses information about what pupils already know and are capable of to set tasks that at the right level of difficulty. Occasionally, however, tasks are too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others. This acts as a brake on accelerating progress at a faster pace.
- Similarly, much teaching is conducted at a good pace and with enough variety to keep pupils interested and on their toes. Sometimes, however, the pace of teaching drops so that pupils' interest wanes and progress slows accordingly.
- Teachers are generally skilful at asking pupils questions that make them think deeply before answering. They expect extended answers and this adds to the development of pupils' high

levels of confidence and ability in speaking articulately. In mathematics, good questioning helps pupils tackle problems with confidence.

- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' successful learning. They are skilful in assessing pupils who are finding work difficult and helping them understand and overcome difficulties.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly. Their comments are of consistently good quality in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teaching gives pupils good opportunities to apply their skills in writing and mathematics across a range of different subjects. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy.
- The teaching of phonics in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1 is successful in laying solid foundations for the development of pupils' reading skills. Consequently, pupils enjoy reading and attainment is above average in reading overall.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have maintained the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support for pupils. As a result, pupils' personal development is of the highest order. Pupils are politely inquisitive, confident and exceptionally proud of their school.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils in classrooms are consistently exceptionally strong. Teachers know each pupil as an individual. Mutual respect is universal across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Even on the few occasions where teaching fails to capture their interest fully, pupils are exceptionally keen to get on with things and give of their best.
- The importance of good manners and treating others with respect is fully understood by pupils.
- Pupils say, and school records confirm, that bullying of any kind is extremely rare. On the few occasions when it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel exceptionally safe in school. They are fully aware of what might constitute potentially dangerous situations and know how to avoid and/or tackle them.
- They speak very knowledgeably with deep understanding about the dangers of using the internet inappropriately.
- For such a small school, there is an impressive range of popular enrichment activities both in school and in the wider community. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they are given to take on responsibilities. For example, older pupils act as 'reading buddies' to younger ones and enjoy serving lunch at tables to younger pupils, teaching them the art of good table manners and meal-time conversation.
- The excellence of pupils' behaviour and their deep respect for each other and those who are different testify to the outstanding quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the standard of behaviour in the school.
- Because of the small numbers of pupils, attendance levels vary somewhat from year to year. However, it is never less than in line with the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school through detailed, accurate and honest analysis of its performance. They know what the school does well and where it could do even better. They take appropriate action to drive improvement. For example, decisive and effective action has been taken to improve procedures for checking on the progress of pupils towards their targets.
- The quality of teaching is checked on regularly and accurately. The outcomes are used to target professional development of staff. Performance management is used effectively to set targets for

staff and hold them to account. The link between the management of performance and salary progression is firmly established.

- The taught curriculum matches pupils' needs and abilities well. There is a good range of enrichment activities in sports and the arts that add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and the outstanding quality of their personal development.
- The school works very effectively with a number of partner schools to provide support and share expertise.
- Good relationships with the vast majority of parents have been nurtured. Every parent who recorded their views on Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are exemplary and give no cause for concern.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good and improving school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is exceptionally supportive of the school. It uses information astutely to evaluate the school's performance in relation to other schools both locally and nationally. The governing body knows the quality of the teaching in the school and is effective in holding leaders and managers to account for the rigour with which they check on its quality and drive up its impact on improving achievement further. The governing body understands fully the operation of performance management and monitors closely its link to increases in teachers' salary. Governors have a firm grip on the school's finances including the allocation of pupil premium funding which they monitor closely. Governors take part in regular training to keep themselves abreast of developments and to hold the school to account for its effectiveness.

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	112120
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	413187

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	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Strutt
Headteacher	Julia Barclay
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
Telephone number	01768 894247
Fax number	01768 894247
Email address	admin@plumpton.cumbria.sch.uk

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