

Oughterside Foundation School

Aspatria, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 2PY

Inspection dates 17–18 September 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.

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, managers and governors have successfully tackled any weaknesses. As a result, pupils' achievement, teachers' leadership and management and teaching are improving rapidly.
- The executive and acting headteachers have brought stability to the school and expectations are high. Staff are now well-supported in developing their teaching skills and their responsibilities as leaders and managers.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons which interest the pupils and which develop their ability to find out things for themselves.
- The acting headteacher has introduced a new tracking system to enable closer checks to be made on pupils' progress and to help teachers to plan work to match pupils' ability. This is allowing all pupils to make good progress across all year groups.
- Results in the Year 6 tests in 2013 show a big improvement compared to those of the previous year. Standards are now at least in line with national expectations in English and mathematics and for some higher, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils have a good attitude towards each other, the adults around them and are keen to learn.
- The acting headteacher has a clear view of how successful the school can be and expects the best from pupils and staff. Leaders and managers now have secure policies and systems which ensure the continual improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The previous governing body has successfully tackled difficult circumstances. The new governing body, together with senior leaders is focused on raising the quality of teaching even further, and provides both support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching. The opportunities for staff to observe outstanding practice in other schools is not yet fully developed.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and literacy skills, particularly writing, to real-life situations.
- There is a lack of consistency in the quality of marking across the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the acting headteacher. She also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the former and current governing body, a representative of the local authority, school staff and parents.
- The inspector took account of 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as responses to parental questionnaires distributed by the school. She also considered six staff questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. The inspector also examined work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oughterside School is much smaller than most primary schools.
- Following a decline in pupil numbers since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in pupils joining the school across Key Stages 1 and 2 during the last academic year. The number of pupils joining Reception at the start of this academic year is much higher than in recent years.
- There are significantly more boys than girls in the school.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. One class comprises Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2. The other class comprises Years 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families and those children that are looked after.)
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is well below average.
- There have been a number of changes to teaching staff since the last inspection and this includes the appointment of an acting headteacher and an executive headteacher who is a headteacher of another school.
- A new governing body was formed a week before the inspection took place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to sustain and accelerate progress in English and mathematics by:
 - increasing the opportunities to apply numeracy and literacy skills, particularly writing, to real-life situations
 - ensuring that teachers quickly adapt lessons when pupils find work too easy or too hard
 - improving further the quality of teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice in other schools.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The inspector saw first hand how quickly children settle into school life when they start in Reception. This is as a result of very effective arrangements between school, home and nurseries. With Years 1 and 2 being taught in the same class and acting as good role models, the younger children develop an eagerness to learn.
- Most children start school with skills that are similar to those expected for their age other than in communication and letter recognition which for some is lower. They make good progress and become confident learners as a result of a curriculum which provides a balance of activities led by adults and opportunities for children to play together and find out things for themselves. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made to the outdoor learning opportunities which the children really enjoy.
- Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 declined in both English and mathematics in 2011 and again in 2012, owing mainly to changes in staffing. From standards in 2012 that were below national averages, the school's actions, together with the good support of the local authority, have led to improvements. In 2013, pupils' standards were above national expectations in reading and in mathematics by the end of Year 6. There is now a whole-school systematic approach to teaching mathematics and reading. Writing, although only in line with national expectations, is improving, owing to the school's focus on improving staff skills in teaching writing.
- Most pupils leaving school in Year 6 in 2013 made better than expected progress in reading and mathematics and all made expected progress in writing. Pupils are well-prepared for the next stage in their education. Progress is now consistently good across all year groups. This shows rapid improvement in the last 12 months.
- Despite the small number involved, it is possible to see that most pupils eligible for pupil-premium funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, now make the same good progress as that of their classmates because of timely and sharply focused help from teachers, teaching assistants and external agencies. Girls and boys alike and those who join the school other than at the usual times, now make equally good progress. The more-able pupils are now provided with the right level of challenge to help them make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of the acting headteacher prioritising improvements in teaching and learning through training opportunities for staff, teaching is mainly good throughout the school and some teaching is outstanding. This has led to improvements in pupils' keenness to find out new things for themselves, resulting in improvements in achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons very well together to ensure that pupils are given work to get the best out of them. Consequently, pupils learn rapidly because they are given work which matches their ability and they are finding out things for themselves.
- Developing pupils' reading skills from an early age has been a focus of the school. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is a strength of the school and has resulted in pupils gaining confidence in their reading abilities. This was seen during the inspection when children in Class 1 were learning a new letter. They shared their knowledge of words beginning with 't' before telling the teacher how they thought the words were spelt. There were screeches of excitement as they then went outside and found hidden objects beginning with the letter 't'. Good progress was made and pupils were clearly having fun through their learning.
- In a Class 2 mathematics lesson, pupils learnt about positive and negative numbers through a range of activities which helped them to solve problems whilst working together in small groups. The more-able pupils were given problems to solve using their numeracy skills. Learning was

made real and enjoyable as tasks were linked to their topic of 'Exploring the World' by making comparisons of summer and winter temperatures in different countries and working out differences. Pupils made good progress. However, in some lessons there are missed opportunities to make pupils' learning relate to real-life experiences, particularly when developing writing skills. Similarly, there are occasions when teachers do not adapt their lessons quickly enough when pupils find work too easy or too hard.

- Although pupils' work is regularly marked, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the time given in lessons to pupils to improve their work, particularly their writing.
- Teachers and teaching assistants who support those with special educational needs and pupils known to be eligible for pupil-premium funding are well-trained to provide for the individual learning needs of each pupil.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- When children join Oughterside, they learn from an early age how to value each other, the adults around them and their school community. There is a strong atmosphere of mutual respect starting in Reception and continuing throughout the school. This leads to pupils feeling happy, safe and secure. This is reflected in their average attendance and their punctuality in the mornings, which is good.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school and this results in positive attitudes to learning and care towards each other. This was reflected in conversations with pupils and their families, and from all the views expressed on Parent View.
- Some of the parents who spoke to the inspector explained that they had moved their children to Oughterside from other schools. This is because of its now growing reputation for promoting good personal development alongside encouraging children to reach their full potential academically. The inspector supports this view.
- Pupils' experiences are extended through a range of well-managed excursions. Visits to Blackpool and Whinlatter take pupils beyond their home environment and provide valuable social experiences for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to learn about different professions with visits from employees of the Police and Fire services.
- Staff ensure that pupils feel safe and learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are on line. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue at this school and school records and the views of parents support this. Pupils learn about different types of bullying. 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.
- Links with the local community, overseas missionaries, topics linked to understanding other cultures and charity raising events organised by the School Council all play a part in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Lessons in PE and activities after school are enjoyed by pupils and this encourages them to pursue sports which help them to stay healthy and promotes their well-being. This was seen during the inspection when a football coach from Carlisle United was taking a lesson.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher has a good understanding of how to drive whole-school improvement. The guidance of the executive headteacher has supported her successfully in making wise decisions. She has introduced effective systems to check on pupils' progress. Middle leaders and managers are still developing their roles in assessing the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility but are keen to play their part in furthering school improvement.
- The acting headteacher is an excellent role model for staff and leads by example. She ensures that all staff are well-supported through training opportunities. Improvements to the quality of teaching are clearly evident and, as one member of staff commented, since the acting headteacher has joined them, she has 'improved the school dramatically'. Both the executive

and acting headteachers recognise the need for even more opportunities for staff to help improve their teaching from seeing outstanding practice in other schools.

- Effective new policies and procedures have strengthened the school's focus on both encouraging pupils' personal development and enabling them to reach their full potential academically.
- The local authority has been effective in working with the former governing body to tackle issues facing the school since the previous inspection. Together they have rightly appointed an executive and acting headteacher.
- Since the previous inspection, a curriculum has been developed which encourages pupils to find out things for themselves. This is particularly evident from pupils' topic work and outdoor mathematics trails which are having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and engagement resulting in accelerating pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - All members of the governing body are relatively new but are committed to continually driving improvements at this school. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. They have an accurate overview of the overall provision. Governors are familiar with performance data and are aware of the quality of teaching which is now linked to teachers' appraisal and salary progression based on meeting targets. They check that staff make effective use of pupil-premium funding and ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to reach the standards of which they are capable.

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	112138
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	426128

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Sonnabend
Headteacher	Sarah Jardine
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2012
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