

Northside Primary School

Northside, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 1BD

Inspection dates 1–2 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' progress is not yet consistently good across the school, particularly in mathematics.
- In some mathematics lessons pupils, especially the most able, are not given work which is challenging enough or which allows them to do practical activities and solve problems.
- Teaching requires improvement because in too many lessons pupils are not moved on to the next task quickly enough and marking of pupils' work does not always give them clear pointers for improvement.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not sufficiently well structured to enable all pupils to make good progress in reading and writing.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils' attitudes to learning are not always consistently positive.
- Attendance is low. New strategies to improve attendance are beginning to work but even closer work with parents is needed to make sure they send their children to school regularly.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the many good new initiatives introduced in the last year have yet to become embedded in the routine work of the school and have their full impact on improving pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher, who are well-supported by the Chair of the Governing Body, have tackled weaknesses and brought about improvements to teaching and to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They and their parents appreciate the good care the school provides.
- Children settle quickly into the secure and welcoming environment of the Nursery class and quickly become confident learners.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and part-lessons, which included shorter visits to classrooms with the headteacher. She also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- There were insufficient responses to assess the on-line questionnaire 'Parent View'. The inspector considered parents' views which were expressed in the school's own parental survey and views from staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, children from armed forces families and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.
- Since September 2012 a new headteacher, an almost entirely new teaching staff and many new governors have been appointed.
- The government's current floor standards do not apply in this very small school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
 - adopting a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics, especially the blending of sounds, across the school
 - regularly checking pupils' understanding in lessons and moving them on quickly to the next task as soon as they are ready
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work gives them clear pointers on how to improve, how to take the next steps in their learning and reach their targets.
- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to learn independently, undertake practical activities and solve problems
 - ensuring that all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, are fully challenged with demanding tasks which enable them to make expected or better than expected progress in mathematics
 - sharing good practice in teaching mathematics across the school.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that new initiatives introduced recently, for example, more consistent and detailed tracking of pupils' progress, are working well, are improved where necessary and become part of the routine work of the school
 - continuing to develop and build upon new strategies to improve attendance and work even more closely with parents to ensure that they understand the importance of sending their children to school regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because their progress does not compare favourably with that found nationally and it is not consistently good across the school.
- The school's recently introduced, detailed tracking system and work in pupils' books has identified that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in mathematics and in their understanding of phonics.
- Many older pupils read fluently and are making good progress in developing their reading and writing skills in Years 5 and 6. However, results from the Year 1 phonics check and teachers' records, show that some younger pupils are still struggling to understand how to blend the sounds that letters make.
- In mathematics, pupils have a better understanding of topics such as shape and space than they do of mathematical calculation. The school has rightly identified that speeding up pupils' progress in mathematics is a priority.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception class with skills which are often well below those expected for their age and go on to make expected progress. There are very small numbers of pupils in each year group, so comparisons of pupils' attainment with those found nationally are statistically unreliable.
- Currently pupils are making the fastest progress in Year 6, where progress is good. However, where pupils have fallen behind in their work in previous years, teachers and teaching assistants have to provide extra help to enable them to catch up and fill the gaps in their knowledge.
- In 2012 and 2013 national test results in English and mathematics show that there were no gaps in attainment between those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and that of their classmates. Pupil premium funding is spent wisely on providing good quality one-to-one tuition and small-group work to ensure that all eligible pupils have good equal opportunities to succeed and to make progress similar to that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with that of their classmates because they receive timely and sensitive extra help from both teachers and teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving it still requires improvement because it has not been consistently good over time and is not yet consistently good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress, particularly in mathematics. Some of the teaching in this subject is good but teachers' best skills are not yet fully shared.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children settle quickly into school routines, understand how to share and take turns and develop their confidence as learners. The teaching of phonics is not yet structured sufficiently well so that all groups of pupils are taught at exactly the right level.
- In some lessons, pupils' progress slows and they become restless when they are asked to listen for too long, have already understood the topic and are keen to move on to the next task.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils sometimes have too few opportunities to solve problems, take part in practical activities relevant to real-life situations and solve problems. Opportunities to make lessons exciting and challenging through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and interesting resources are missed.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils' understanding is often not checked regularly enough in lessons and the work set is sometimes too easy for pupils, particularly the most able, so they do not achieve their very best.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and new systems of assessment are helping pupils to make

faster progress. However, the quality of marking varies and in some classes and subjects, pupils are not given enough clear pointers for improving their work.

- In good lessons, the pace of learning is rapid because teachers set challenging tasks, build pupils' confidence and reward them for work done well. For example, in an English lesson older pupils worked hard to identify subordinate clauses in complex sentences accurately.
- In other lessons where teaching is good, teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable, give very clear explanations and use practical activities to help pupils learn. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were seen making good progress in small groups as they developed their mathematical skills using resources as varied as bean bags, balloons and biscuits.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Although many pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, behaviour is judged as requiring improvement because pupils' attitudes to learning are not yet consistently positive and their attendance is low.
- The school now checks on pupils' attendance very carefully, follows up absences rigorously and rewards pupils who attend regularly. However, attendance is still low and even more work is needed to make parents aware of the need to ensure that their children come to school regularly. Exclusions are rare.
- In classes, most children are keen to learn and work hard. A few pupils have shorter concentration spans and less good attitudes to learning, so they sometimes become restless and drift off from the task in hand.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that any issues of bullying in school are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe and are very appreciative of the support and care the school gives. Staff welcome parents at the school door, make sure children settle very quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes and give particularly good support to children whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are knowledgeable about dangers, for example, of drug and alcohol abuse. Pupils and their parents particularly enjoyed a very successful and well-attended recent session on the safe use of the Internet.
- In lessons and assemblies, pupils' social and moral development is promoted well. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and enjoy their roles as, for example, play leaders, at breaks and lunchtimes.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although leaders have secured improvement in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, leadership and management still require improvement overall because new initiatives to improve the school have all been introduced in the last year by new senior leaders to an almost entirely new staff. Consequently, these have not had time to have their full impact on accelerating pupils' progress and have not yet been checked, improved and become a routine part of all staff's work.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been instrumental in moving the school forward. Their honest appraisal of the school's work and identification of the right priorities for future development are now giving the school a sound capacity for improvement.
- New systems to track pupils' progress and to identify when pupils need extra help are already having an impact on achievement. They are also ensuring that extra funding, the pupil premium, is spent well so that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Extra funding for Primary School Sport is being used to buy new physical education resources, to provide training for teachers, and to collaborate with other small schools to develop a support

network and to organise sports competitions between the schools.

- New initiatives to monitor the quality of teaching, manage staff performance and provide good quality training are now leading to improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Staff have been trained recently and new policies and procedures have been put in place.
- The school has received good support from the local authority. The general advisor visits the school regularly and has given the school help with evaluating its work and improving the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum has been extensively reviewed in the last year to ensure that all areas of learning are fully covered, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils speak enthusiastically about a range of sporting, artistic and cultural enrichment activities they enjoy. A residential visit to York was a highlight for many older pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is very knowledgeable about the school's performance data, the quality of teaching and how staff performance is managed. She has worked with the new senior leaders to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and identify priorities for improvement. Many other governors are new to the role. They have access to good training and are now beginning to develop their work of monitoring the school's work. School funds are efficiently managed and governors challenge the way in which funds such as the pupil premium and the new Primary School Sport funding are spent.

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	112142
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	426249

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Ann Lancaster
Headteacher	Leesa Osborn
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2008
Telephone number	01900 62255
Fax number	01900 77384
Email address	admin@northside.cumbria.sch.uk

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