

# Montreal CofE Primary School

Ennerdale Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria, CA25 5LW

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 achieve well overall. Their skills are generally weak for their age when they start, but standards are usually at least average when they leave. Progress is good in Reception, excellent in Year 6 and improving in infant classes.
- By and large, teaching is now good. Some is outstanding. Improvement in teaching is raising standards for younger children and infants. Support staff make an excellent contribution to learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They behave well throughout the school, especially in lessons. They look after one another and feel safe at school.
- The new headteacher has been tireless in his efforts to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Initiatives have been well-considered and are proving effective. New approaches to support literacy are well organised and successful. Separation of Years 1 and 2, and flexible grouping by ability in Years 3 and 4 are making learning more efficient.
- The local authority has been generous in its support for improvement, providing expertise and wise counsel.
- Governors are diligent in attending to their responsibilities and have made a valuable contribution to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few lessons are not as effective as they should be, particularly in some junior classes. Occasionally, they are not planned well enough and sometimes pupils get in a muddle because instructions are unclear. There is need for continuing support and firm management where teaching is weak.
- Pupils do not get enough chance to re-do work in the light of advice. Younger pupils are rarely given specific extra tasks to clear up confusion.
- Among staff at middle-leadership level there is scope for clarification of what is expected and, on occasion, holding staff to account.
- Though teachers work hard with marking, they sometimes do not spot the really key things that a pupil has to do to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons for a substantial time; two lessons were observed with the headteacher. In addition, short sessions were observed in lessons for science, French, music and physical education and there were brief observations of about 10 sessions where letters and their sounds or pupils' skills in reading were being developed. An assembly presented by the headteacher was observed. All teachers were seen.
- Meetings were held with several members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. The inspector had a telephone conversation with the inspector who had monitored the school since it was found to require improvement at the previous full inspection. He also held meetings with the headteacher and middle leaders and a group of pupils.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils' work in the current year, the school's recent and previous national assessment results, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and improvement plans. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures and behaviour and attendance were also examined. The inspector heard two sets of pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a telephone message from a parent. There were 17 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This primary school is smaller in size than average.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. None is learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in the armed services) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Most children starting in Reception have attended the adjoining nursery.
- There is a breakfast club which is attended by about two dozen pupils.
- Following a period with unsettled leadership, with a succession of short-term or temporary headteacher appointments, the present headteacher took up his post in January 2013. There is no deputy headteacher. Three teachers who are on upper pay scales have various assigned responsibilities; they comprise the school's middle-leadership personnel.
- The previous inspection in December 2012 found that the school required improvement. Since then one of Her Majesty's Inspectors has made monitoring visits to the school, with an interim letter assessing the progress being made.

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

- Improve achievement in literacy and mathematics, ensuring uniformly strong progress throughout the school by:
  - providing teaching for all pupils that is efficient in developing their skills and understanding, through planning lessons and adapting them when underway to avoid muddles, anticipating what might go wrong and how to deal with difficulties
  - providing marking and other feedback to pupils that always has a sharp focus on exactly what each individual needs to do to improve
  - giving opportunities for improvement points to be reinforced by going over work a second time, or by doing additional tasks to clarify any misunderstandings
  - where teaching of literacy or mathematics is not yet consistently good, providing ongoing support for improvement and firm management of teaching quality.
- Improve leadership and management at middle-leader level by clarifying expectations and responsibilities and holding staff to account with regard to meeting these expectations and carrying out their responsibilities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well though, from year to year as they move through the school, their progress is on occasions variable.
- Most children join Reception from the adjacent nursery. In the main, they know how to get on with one another and can concentrate reasonably well for their age, but they are not very good at talking coherently. Progress is now good in Reception; children make fair headway in developing their talking, listening and counting skills.
- Infants are making better progress than in the past. Splitting them into separate Year 1 and 2 classes has made learning much more manageable. Reading is developing very well and mathematics is better than in the past. Writing is a little better. However, with sums, a pupil who thinks  $51+13=28$  is not necessarily sorted out on tens and units by suitable follow-up tasks. Marking sometimes picks up on misconceptions such as the rule for 'ch' and 'tch' (so 'mach', corrected to match) but ignores 'Wen we wen hom' a line or two later. Outstanding teaching in a Year 2 lesson developed pupils' grasp of adjectives well. However, marking, though quite diligent, does not always home in on key points for improvement. As a result, progress with writing is a little hit-and-miss.
- All pupils spend 45 minutes a day on 'phonics' (letters and the sounds they make), 'guided reading' or grammar. Reading is developing well across the school and, for their age and ability, pupils are confident and competent at figuring out how to say words and making sense of what a book is driving at.
- In the past, infants have sometimes not made sufficient headway. While this issue in the infants is largely rectified, some of those now in junior classes need to make up for lost time. Quite a few pupils in Years 3 and 4 struggle with learning, but the situation is eased with some separate grouping of pupils by ability. However, when teaching is weaker in quality, progress slows.
- In Year 6, generally outstanding teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes combine to ensure exceptional progress. The inspector asked pupils which year at school had been most enjoyable. 'It's best now, because we learn a lot more', was the consensus. In 2013, results were above average and progress from age seven to 11 was in the top third nationally. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well. Mathematics is a considerable strength. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are taught as a separate activity; pupils' command of the mechanics of writing is excellent.
- Data for 2013 show that by the end of Year 6, pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding did better than others and far better than similar pupils nationally. In mathematics, their attainment was more than a third of a level higher than that of others in the class; in reading and writing it was almost as far ahead. Eligible pupils and those who find it hard to learn benefit from the high-quality support of teaching assistants and the learning mentor. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds do equally well by the time they leave the school.
- In the 2013 Year 6 tests, pupils with learning difficulties (disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs) showed progress significantly better than might be expected.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. However, across the school it varies from outstanding to requiring improvement. No inadequate teaching was seen; that is a marked improvement since the previous inspection.
- For 45 minutes each day, pupils of similar ability but different ages are in small groups: younger ones to develop their understanding of letters and sounds, older ones to improve understanding of things they have read or their grammar and spelling. This work, based on a commercial scheme, is exceptionally well-organised. The Year 1 teacher's expertise with the scheme and the talented input of teaching assistants make a vital contribution to the success of this programme.
- In some lessons teaching is highly effective in engaging pupils' eagerness for learning. In Year 6,

the teacher talked at some length, and with pupils' rapt attention, about the choice of adjectives and adverbs to evoke the mood of Tennyson's writing in *The Lady of Shalot*. Pupils across the ability range grasped the point and set about using a dictionary and thesaurus to craft riveting writing. In Year 2, with initiative thrown fully to pupils, there were adjective additions such as: 'The awesome cat sat on the rugged wall'. In different ways, high-quality teaching inspires enthusiastic and successful learning.

- Occasionally, intended teaching has not been thought through sufficiently, or teachers are not quick enough to spot how to deal with a situation where pupils are getting confused by adapting the lesson accordingly. In a lesson with a small class on early division, the planned work on dividing 12 by 3 was reasonable, but a group that stumbled into dividing 38 by 3 found it more difficult. Not all had the right ideas by the end of the lesson.
- Marking is often painstaking. It is usually, but not always, well-focused and perceptive. More could be done in providing a sharp focus on exactly what each individual needs to do to improve, and in following through with additional activities to reinforce the points made.
- In Reception, a well-considered balance of adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves enables youngsters to develop confidence and coherence in talking and thinking about what is going on around them. There is excellent liaison between the teacher and the very skilled teaching assistant.
- Teachers have expertise in science and there was interesting and productive work underway for pupils of different ages. At present, the school buys in effective additional expertise for music and physical education.
- The learning mentor cherishes and enthuses pupils; she knows well those who struggle with challenges at home or in school.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, parents, staff and governors agree: behaviour has improved. Pupils really value 'golden time'. They would not want to miss the Friday afternoon games, party, or baking. The school has got it right with the use of rewards and sanctions to motivate pupils' best behaviour.
- Pupils like the staff. They are adamant about feeling entirely comfortable talking to an adult, generally the learning mentor, if anything were upsetting them. Yet they say there is no need. They feel really safe and happy at school and told the inspector firmly that no one makes hurtful remarks, and definitely does nothing that would amount to bullying in any form. They have a mature sense of how relationships work and can recognise safe and unsafe situations. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- In lessons there is often a palpable buzz of enthusiasm for learning and keenness to get better at things, such as in physical education where pupils enjoy physical challenges just as they rise to academic demands in mathematics and English. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 are articulate and have impressive self-confidence. They engage a visitor in conversation with composure. Older pupils look forward to secondary school with assurance. They are shrewd in sensing how well they are doing, and how well the school is doing.
- Attendance is above average; pupils want to come to school. For many, the breakfast club makes a very good start to the day.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, since starting the job a year ago, has been unflagging in his efforts and insistence on bringing about improvements in teaching, and thereby improvement in pupils' progress and life chances. The school has turned a corner, yet the headteacher would be the first to say that there is further to go.
- With the assiduous support of the local authority, the headteacher has monitored teaching,

marking, teachers' overall contribution and pupils' progress closely– as well as teaching half-time. Evaluations of teachers' work, rightly, pull no punches. In a few cases, what teachers do has not been good enough; notes made make no bones about it. In the main, where necessary, this has been the effective spur to make it better.

- The roles and responsibilities of middle leaders have been clarified recently. There is some unevenness in the quality of work of middle leaders.
- The headteacher confronts any issues in the school conscientiously. He has been very well supported by local authority staff, who have been very generous with their time. The headteacher is very well supported by staff and parents.
- The curriculum gives pupils a good all-round education. The 'adventure education' initiative is excellent in building team spirit and pupils' sense of give and take. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their personal skills. An assembly on Robert the Bruce aired aspirations about hope and perseverance. Pupils have enjoyed a demonstration of Indian culture and shared the experience 'going down the mine'. Sports funding is spent appropriately by the employment of a coach to develop the skills a teacher who will lead work in physical education.
- The local authority has been unstinting in its perceptive and high-quality support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have been resolute in tackling the school's large budget deficit and establishing firm leadership at headteacher level. They give him staunch support. They ensure necessary action to improve teaching and are very mindful of the need for salaries to be justified by the quality of work staff do; they are firm on the performance management of all staff. Governors are suitably experienced and trained in dealing with data on pupils' achievement. Each has involvement with particular aspects of the school's work; they have good awareness of the quality of teaching. They have allocated earmarked pupil premium funding wisely and generally check the resulting benefits. They are meticulous in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## 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>	132170
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	426336

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karl Melville
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Herbert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 February 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 811347
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