

Goodly Dale Primary School

Lake Road, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 2JX

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Nearly all of them make good progress from starting points that are very variable because of the small size of cohorts.
- The youngest children get off to a storming start in the nursery and reception class. They are taught successfully and enjoy their very productive early years in school.
- Pupils are taught successfully by conscientious teachers who take a great pride in doing their best to encourage learning. There is a clear sense that pupils like their teachers and that the teachers like their pupils.
- Pupils behave well. They are kept safe. Lessons are very rarely interrupted by weaker behaviour. Pupils like their school and want it to be seen in a good light. No child has anything to fear here.
- Leadership and management are good. A big success in the improvement of teaching and achievement over the past year has been the reorganisation of teaching to make the best use of the existing skills and interests of all staff; this is giving the school a very good chance of building on the success of the recent past.
- Governance is good. Passion and understanding is complemented by a strong commitment to hold leaders and managers to account and ask difficult questions of them if they have any worries about the performance of staff and pupils in their school. This ensures the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they have done well but do not give them enough guidance about what they need to do to get even better. This is especially so in mathematics.
- A few pupils, including the most able, do not always produce the best work that they can and some teachers are over-tolerant of this.
- Not all teachers have a sufficient understanding of what outstanding teaching looks and feels like.
- Until very recently, leaders and managers have not paid enough attention to checking the way teachers mark pupils' work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of nine lessons and saw all staff with a teaching commitment.
- He met with two governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The opportunity was taken to talk to several parents as they collected their children from school and to talk to many pupils in lessons and at break times.
- The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work and the environment they learn and play in.
- He looked at the information teachers gather as they check on the progress of pupils.
- School documentation relating to the safeguarding and protection of pupils was looked at alongside many other documents relating to monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness and plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs is supported at school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- There are similar numbers of boys and girls and nearly all pupils are White British
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils is supported through the pupil premium which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with medical needs but there are currently no such pupils on roll.
- There is a much greater than average change in the school's population from year to year. In 2012, eight out of 13 pupils assessed at the end of Year 6 had joined the school after end of Year 2 assessments; this year, the figure is five out of seven.
- A new headteacher took up post three weeks before the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, especially, but not exclusively, in mathematics, in order to raise standards by:
 - making sure that when teachers mark work they make it clear to pupils not only what they achieved but what they need to do to achieve more
 - checking that teachers always expect pupils to do their best work and avoid careless mistakes; particularly the most able
 - leaders and managers evaluating the effectiveness of the way teachers help pupils to improve through their marking of their work
 - making sure that all teachers are given the opportunity to observe outstanding teaching to give them a better understanding of the magical qualities that are so hard to describe in words.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and many pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and fulfil their potential well. When looking at data about the achievements in this school a lot of care has to be taken. All groups of pupils are small. Some of them amount to a single child.
- Most children join the nursery and reception class with learning and development that varies very much from below to broadly the level expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are reaching slightly higher than average levels in their key skills when they move to Year 1. Their physical and social developments and their understanding of the world are particularly well developed. Their learning in the outdoors is a joy to behold.
- Pupils are currently taught well in Years 1 and 2 and make good progress. In 2013, all pupils met national expectations but none exceeded them. This has improved this year and there are already a few who can confidently be expected to reach higher levels. Especially in reading and writing.
- Last year, too many pupils in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and their sounds) did not meet expectations. Adjustments to the teaching of phonics have accelerated progress and many pupils now make good progress.
- Last year, pupils left Year 6 with very impressive results that accurately reflected the good progress they had made in the school. Attainment although not currently as high is moving to above average. This year, most Year 6 pupils are well on the way towards achieving or exceeding their individual targets. Last year's results showed that pupils had made better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. Part of this is due to the fact that the guidance pupils are given about how to improve their work is not as good in mathematics as it is in English.
- The progress of the most able is improving and is now good. The results of national tests last year showed that many Year 6 pupils did better than was expected of them at the end of Year 2 especially in reading and writing. Currently, more are on target to reach above the expected level especially in reading and writing.
- Reading is good but there is no complacency and the school keeps encouraging pupils to read more often. Younger ones use their new knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle harder words and older pupils use books for finding out about things as well as for the pure pleasure of reading stories.
- In a school as small as this, progress is checked at an individual level. The only significant groups are boys and girls. Even here, each pupil often accounts for as much as 20% of results. There are very low numbers in all year groups of pupils known to be supported by the pupil premium. Individual records show that there is very little difference in the progress and attainment in English and mathematics of different pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to help them to achieve equally with all other pupils. Pupils who start at different times during the school year are welcomed and also make good progress. There is strong promotion of equal opportunities. Good relationships with parents and good communication with them helps school and parents to work together fruitfully in a joint endeavour to promote achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Nothing less than good teaching was observed during the inspection. This fits in well with the good progress pupils make and the evidence of leaders' and managers' own monitoring and evaluation of teaching in the recent past. Not enough teaching has that extra wow factor that captures pupils' enthusiasm and leads to outstanding progress.

- Some teaching is a joy to experience, such as when the youngest children lose themselves in learning without realising it. A lesson was observed in driving, freezing rain; the children were oblivious as they searched for hidden objects in fallen leaves and mud, counted how many they had and then worked out how many more they needed to find. Having found the remainder they excitedly suggested hiding them again for other people to find them. Teachers show a very good understanding of not only the ability but also the characteristics of all the pupils in their classes. They recognise mood swings and when pupils are struggling or coasting. Teachers usually set high standards of work and attitudes and expect them to be met.
- Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers manage behaviour effectively. In most lessons, teachers 'ring the changes' well, moving pupils from situation to situation and activity to activity to help maintain interest and attention. A good example of this was with a Year 5 and 6 group playing a game of 'twister', where each pupil had a number pinned to them and each had to attach to another whose number was either a factor or a multiple of their own. Lively, fun and a very valuable learning experience.
- Expectations are suitably high, especially with regard to pupils' behaviour. Sometimes, though, teachers let more able pupils get away with making careless mistakes, especially in their writing.
- Not enough attention is paid to making it clear to pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Too often, teachers mark pupils' work and tell them what they have achieved and how hard they have worked. They do not always inform them what they need to do to make their work even better. This is particularly so in mathematics and goes some way to explaining why achievement, especially for the most able, is slightly lower than in English.
- Teachers make their classrooms bright and breezy with many good examples of pupils' artwork and illustrations related to the work they are doing. What is missing to a large extent is any accompanying writing to celebrate the best examples of written work. Teachers have gone a long way towards meeting an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection (to improve writing) but fall short of joining with pupils in celebrating the fact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. No child has anything to fear here. This is a big reason for the increasing number of parents who want their children to be enrolled.
- Pupils are given good guidance about what could be considered unsafe in different situations. They are advised about how to use computers, mobile phones and other forms of technology sensibly. Pupils are encouraged to play without fear but to be aware of other people when they do so. They are not mollycoddled but nor are they exposed to unnecessary risk.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. There is a little wilful behaviour but it is managed successfully by teachers and support staff so that it does not interfere with anyone else's learning.
- There is a very peaceful, settled atmosphere around the school. Lunch and break times require minimal supervision because pupils are sensible. Midday supervisors say how well behaved most pupils are.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. Some pupils work hard when they are being supported or taught but then let their thoughts drift away when the adults move on. There are also instances of most able pupils not doing the best work they are capable of. In written work, for instance, too many very capable pupils submit work that, whilst good, is careless. A few do not seem to acknowledge that however well they are taught some of their careless mistakes could cost them dearly when their work is assessed.
- Pupils are clearly proud of their school. There is no evidence of damage to property and pupils are keen to tell visitors about how good the school is and how much they like their teachers.
- Statistically, attendance is below average but this is distorted by a low number of pupils who are persistently absent despite the school's rigorous demands. Overall, it is very clear that the true picture is that nearly all pupils attend very well.

The leadership and management are good

- The transfer of headship has been very well managed. Change appears to have been seamless and to have caused no concerns to pupils, parents or staff.
- The school has an accurate understanding of current strengths and how to build on the rising improvements. Monitoring of pupils' progress is accurate and data used well to set school priorities as well as to provide help where it is most needed.
- The drive to improve further teaching and learning is well established. Teaching is checked and evaluated diligently and weaker aspects are promptly resolved although marking remains an area to tackle. Teachers receive perceptive guidance about how they can perform even better. For a few, the opportunity to see what outstanding teaching looks like and, importantly, feels like would be much appreciated.
- There has been a particularly effective reorganisation of teaching responsibilities to make the best use of existing skills and to give others valuable experiences with groups that are less familiar to them. This is creating a good and very adaptable staff.
- Everyone in the school is a middle manager in some form or other. All work together to produce precise action plans that show how changes are to raise attainment. Subject leaders have focussed very well on how their subjects will be taught and the progress pupils make.
- The new headteacher has made an immediate impact on making sure that the targets teachers are set for improvement are more precise than they were and more closely evaluated. A few targets still do not make it clear enough how reaching them will help raise standards or by how much.
- The school has a hugely welcoming ethos. It does not pick and choose. All pupils are welcomed. Parents who have brought their children here from other schools speak fondly and positively about how happy they are with the school and the way it is helping their children.
- Leaders and managers make sure that the school is a safe place but they are also keen to encourage a spirit of adventure rather than fearfulness. This is exceptionally well demonstrated in the imaginative curriculum that uses natural spaces to encourage and inspire individuals to learn and develop through outdoor play and learning in a woodland environment. This makes the best possible use of outdoor learning by promoting essential basic skills alongside encouraging an awareness of, and joy in, the environment.
- The new primary school sports funding is being spent well to extend the range of activities offered to pupils as well as increase the expertise of staff.
- A year ago the school came to the attention of the local authority because its results had dipped. There was an immediate and helpful response. After this the local authority recognised that this was not a school that caused concern. The local authority has pulled back. It makes it clear what support is available but does not force it on the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors show a good understanding of the school. In a small community several have had their own children educated here. They are very satisfied and keen to encourage more parents to share their positive experiences. Governors are well informed about attainment and the quality of teaching. As a result, they have a good awareness of pupils' progress and the overall quality of teaching including the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers. They play an important role in setting the headteacher targets for improving the school and checking whether they have been met. The governing body has shown a good awareness of financial matters and ensure that within a fixed budget, pupils in the school are getting the best deal available to them.
 - Governors take great care to ensure that safeguarding meets requirements. They are well trained in the importance of their safeguarding and protection. Governors are also acutely aware of the extra funding that is coming into the school through the pupil premium and sports funding for primary schools. They know how it is being spent and that this benefits the recipients.

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	112191
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	440811

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Maycock
Headteacher	Andrew Corcoran
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2012
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