

Great Corby Primary School

Great Corby, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA4 8NE

Inspection dates

18 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Children starting in the Nursery generally have skills and abilities that are typical for their age; by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Pupils make good progress.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception class quickly settle to learning and make very rapid progress.
- Pupils soon become confident in linking letters to sounds and make good headway with their reading.
- Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress with reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school.
- Teaching is good. It generally provides pupils with an appropriate range of opportunities for learning in a variety of ways. Pupils are usually given effective guidance and support for improvement.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well in classrooms and about the school. When lessons are interesting, they are keen to learn and make good effort. They feel safe and know how to take care of themselves.
- The school is well led and managed. As the school has expanded, and with changes to staffing, the headteacher has given vigorous attention to ensuring that pupils' good achievement and the good quality of teaching have been at least maintained and, in various ways, improved. Those with a leadership role are ambitious for pupils' academic and personal development.
- The governing body is thorough in meeting its responsibilities. Governors have high expectations and hold staff to account for the work they do, ensuring that teaching is good and that pupils achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils do not learn quickly enough because they continue with tasks they have already mastered or are losing interest in.
- Pupils sometimes regard their work as 'finished' without having checked for slips which they are capable of spotting.
- A minority of pupils have immature handwriting and work is sometimes untidy.
- Some marking does not give enough help with spelling and other basic elements of writing, nor does it give enough help with style.
- Some pupils are not very sure about the levels at which they are working, nor clear about exactly what they should aim to do better in their next piece of work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine lessons; two lessons had shared observations with the headteacher.
- There were meetings with three members of the governing body. An inspector had a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and with staff who have some leadership responsibility, and had discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors 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, and the school's evaluation of its own performance. Records on safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined. Inspectors listened to the reading of pupils from three year groups.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with about a dozen parents as they brought children to school; there was one letter from a parent. The 12 questionnaires completed by staff were reviewed.

Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is smaller than average size.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. None is learning to speak English as an additional language.
- At present, about one pupil in 10 is eligible for the pupil premium, which is less than half the national proportion. (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 whose learning needs are supported at the level known as school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are four classes: Nursery and Reception, Years 1 and 2, Years 2 and 3, Years 5 and 6. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are sometimes split into groups in three rooms, for instance when learning literacy.
- The school provides before-school care from 8am and after-school care until 6pm.
- Great Corby Primary School converted to become an academy school on 20 February 2012. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school now provides for children from the age of three. The number of children enrolled at the school has risen from 48 to 82 since 2009. The headteacher works part time and in her absence the deputy headteacher is in charge of the school. The school has close links with a secondary academy. At the time of the inspection, there was temporary staffing in one classroom. One teacher was new to the profession.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, to ensure that pupils always learn quickly, by moving on the work that pupils do when it is evident that they have mastered the task in hand or are losing interest in the current activity.
- Raise achievement further by:
 - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for checking their work to pick up simple slips in arithmetic, spelling and sentence structure
 - where necessary, helping pupils to improve the neatness of their work and develop a fluent script with handwriting
 - developing marking, especially for middle and higher ability pupils, to give greater help with improving the mechanics of their writing (particularly spelling), and its creative style so that they become more skilful in choosing the best words or phrasing to express themselves effectively
 - clarifying for pupils the levels at which they are working and the precise steps for improvement they must take in their next piece of work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When young children join the school, their skills in talking, listening and counting are generally typical for their age, though there is variation within each year group. They quickly settle to learning, giving good attention to adults, concentrating well on activities they have been given or that they have chosen, and getting on well with one another. Some Reception children have maturity beyond their years with early writing and when working together on construction activities.
- There is impressive headway in linking letters to sounds, with recognising words and understanding their meaning, and making a reasonable stab at spelling. A Reception pupil recognised 'shrink' and could explain it. Another wrote about 'dirty wartir', and was concerned that it might upset penguins! A Year 4 pupil could explain 'pathetic' in the context of a story. Year 5 pupils could explain vividly how a dog 'pricks up its ears' but struggled with the word 'accentuated'. From Year 4 onwards, the most able readers can read with good intonation, scanning a whole sentence and judging where to put emphasis. Good reading skills underpin overall good progress in the school.
- Data show that by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been above average for the last four years. This is also the case at the end of Year 6. From Year 2 to Year 6, pupils, including the most able, have typically made good progress that is in the top 25% nationally.
- Data relating to the small number entitled to help from the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, shows that these pupils make good progress and reach higher standards than similar pupils elsewhere, and do almost as well as others in this school. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make as least as good progress as others, as a result of the good support they receive from teaching assistants as well as teachers. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have equal opportunities for success.
- Pupils' general learning skills are good. However, they sometimes make slips in arithmetic (for instance, when 'carrying' a number to the next column with adding), with spelling or with sentences that do not make sense. When told that there is an error, they can generally sort it out, but too often do not do so without a prompt. In the writing of one of the most able Year 6 pupils, spelling such as 'supost' and 'contries' had persisted in writing that was otherwise at a high level (Level 5).
- In the main, pupils of above-average ability usually present their work neatly. They underline headings properly and their handwriting is well developed for their age. Some pupils' work is less well presented than it could be and their handwriting is sometimes underdeveloped.

The quality of teaching is good

- Over time, the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement is good. A very effective range of learning opportunities, clear advice and support foster productive learning.
- In Nursery and Reception, a very well-chosen range of equipment and activities indoors and outside is of compelling interest for the children. They respond with sustained fascination, inquisitiveness, concentration and learn very effectively.
- In Year 6, pupils had written in response to a wide range of stimulating opportunities. They included the chance to write instructions for organising a barbeque (BBQ) and to explain the cycle of evaporation and rainfall. Blake's poem *Tiger, tiger, burning bright, in the forests of the night* had given opportunity to recognise linguistic devices such as repetition (tiger, tiger), alliteration (burning bright) and rhyme (bright/ night). Pupils, including those of modest ability, had expanded with a simile such as: 'eyes as bright as fire in a live volcano'.
- Activities are devised that are very effective for their purpose, but pupils are not always moved on quickly enough when they have fully grasped the point or perhaps become tired of continuing

with much the same thing. To learn how to use grid references, Year 1 and 2 pupils gathered in the hall with a huge mat marked in rows and columns. They responded with enthusiasm to giving grid references for themselves or a teddy bear. They enjoyed the activity for quarter of an hour and continued to gain in skill, but much less so after twenty five minutes. Older pupils were engaged in a game that involved recognising that the names of things (proper nouns) need capital letters. It was great fun, but actually the pupils knew all about the requirement for capital letters.

- Marking of the work of weaker pupils is often detailed and painstaking, providing correction of spellings and suggestions for better wording. For instance, after starting several sentences with 'Then', the teacher suggested 'Eventually' instead. Middle and higher ability pupils' work is less closely marked. For example, spelling errors are generally identified but not corrected by the teacher or the pupil. There is little evidence of guidance through marking to improve the choice that the most able pupils make of words and phrasing. Limitations in the marking of the most able pupils' work restrict their progress to good rather than outstanding.
- Pupils have 'targets' pasted in the front of their workbooks and these include a large collection of generic points for improvement, such as 'use more exciting words'. However, when asked, some pupils seem a little vague about the level at which they are working and about what exactly they need to aim to improve next time they do a piece of work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are keen to please their teachers. They make a good effort with their work and cooperate well together when working in pairs or groups. Most take pride in their written work. Pupils are seldom inattentive, lethargic or mischievous. They enjoy school and attend well.
- Behaviour is very good as pupils circulate within the school and play outdoors. Pupils were very sensible and demonstrated very good behaviour when heavy rain started during the lunch break, with most of them on the playground. There is good supervision of pupils inside the school and outside. In the before-and-after-school club pupils are looked after by capable staff. Interesting activities are provided; there is a wholesome and friendly atmosphere.
- Pupils get on well together. They say that there are very occasional upsets but that things are soon sorted out. Pupils have confidence that they could look to staff for support if anything was troubling them. Realistically, an older pupil said: 'Yes, but I'd probably talk to my mates first!' They say that pupils are considerate of one another and that there is nothing that amounts to bullying in any form. The school's records show that there has been no significant bullying or behaviour incidents in recent years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school engages professional advice on health and safety. Governors are scrupulous in ensuring that the school is a safe place and that risks have been properly assessed when on excursions. Pupils could give a good account of procedures if they had lost touch with the main party on a visit to Edinburgh. There is thorough attention to safeguarding and child protection matters and these meet all requirements. Pupils feel that they are well looked after. The school arranges appropriate guidance on safety, for instance from the community police officer, and from others with professional expertise on issues such as encounters with people they do not know.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the caring and mutually supportive culture in the school, by which staff and governors put great store.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets the tone of the school, with high aspirations for pupils' success and for the contribution that staff make. Staff at all levels show exceptionally strong support for her leadership. The school is held in very high regard by parents.
- Some leadership responsibility is delegated to the deputy headteacher and to the teacher in

charge of the Nursery and Reception. There is very effective collaborative leadership. Roles are clearly understood and expertise is shared. There are appropriate checks on the work that staff do; expectations are made clear and salary progression is properly related to the quality of their work. Professional development is provided for staff, for example by the University of Cumbria, with which the school has strong links.

- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and support is arranged where pupils need to catch up. This ensures good progress for all. As the number of pupils in the school has grown, there has been shrewd planning with the organisation of classes and deployment of staff to ensure the best of opportunities for pupils. Good teaching and pupils' good progress have been sustained and improved upon over time. Nonetheless, the school's leaders are keen to improve the school's work and pupils' achievement from good to outstanding. For example, they are aware that pupils' work could be better presented, that lessons could sometimes move more quickly and that pupils' writing could be better.
- The school attaches great importance to pupils' personal development and there are ample opportunities to advance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural maturity. Pupils were observed eagerly learning how to play musical instruments. They value the input that the clergy make to the life of the school. They relish opportunities for sport and talk with ardour of the Talkin Tarn run. The school uses the new primary school sport funding effectively in providing additional opportunities such as tennis and swimming in Carlisle. There is a rich and broad curriculum.
- Since becoming established as an academy, the school has been prudent in making good arrangements for services such as management of the payroll and health and safety protocols. There are effective links with the local authority regarding such matters as special educational needs. The School Improvement Partner knows the school well and provides wise and timely advice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are diligent in the discharge of their responsibilities. They avail themselves of online training with, for example, safeguarding requirements. They understand data on the progress that pupils make. The committee structure and the contact that individual governors have with the school facilitate efficient consideration of budget, staffing and the full range of issues that governors deal with. They make sure that earmarked funding, such as that for sports and the pupil premium, is spent to good effect. They have appropriate involvement in staff appraisal and decisions about salary progression. They have made a strong contribution to the continuing development and improvement of the school, ensuring good teaching and achievement. They are mindful of the needs of the community that the school serves and have been instrumental in establishing the Nursery and the care provision at the start and end of the day. They make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

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	137860
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	431387

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Percy
Headteacher	Jane Mottram
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01228 560399
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