

Long Marton School

Long Marton, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, CA16 6BT

Inspection dates 7–8 May 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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a school that serves its community well. It is a school that many parents go out of their way to get their children into and many pupils come from homes much closer to other schools.
- Pupils achieve well. When they join the school in the Reception Year their level of development is very little different to children anywhere else in the country. By the time they leave Year 6 they have made better than average progress. This is because they have been well taught and have been enthused with a joy of learning.
- It is wonderful to talk with pupils and to hear about how much they like to help each other. It is also heartening to hear that parents have so much faith in the way that staff look after their children and guide them towards making good choices for the future. Behaviour is good and pupils are kept safe.
- Teaching is consistently good and improving. Staff are ambitious and leaders and managers greatly help them to fulfil their ambitions.
- Teachers are keen to improve and have a determination to help pupils of all ages and abilities to do better than was expected of them when they joined the school. A strength in teaching is that every pupil knows what is expected of them in every lesson.
- This is a school that is moving forwards increasingly quickly. It has an exceptional headteacher and an excellent governing body. It proudly wears the badge of 'community school' and it is just that. There is no reason to question why it should not keep on improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing often falls behind that in reading and mathematics.
- Older pupils are often careless in their writing. They let their imagination run riot, whilst ignoring that an important feature of writing is that other people might want to read what they have written.

Information about this inspection

- Eight lessons were observed. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most twice.
- Many informal conversations were held with pupils and staff.
- The inspector met with seven governors and a representative of the local authority. He spoke with many parents and took account of the 58 responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Samples of pupils' work were checked as were the surroundings in which pupils learn and play.
- The way that staff and governors make sure that pupils are kept safe was checked and also the way staff keep a check on pupils' progress.
- The inspector looked at how good the systems are that leaders, managers and governors use for checking the effectiveness of teachers' performance.
- Plans for improvement were read and discussed with leaders, managers and governors.
- The school has a breakfast club, an after-school club, a nursery and a holiday club. These are run on the school premises by a private provider and are open to all children, not only those on the school roll. They were not within the remit for this inspection.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Fewer than average pupils are supported through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority. The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above 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.
- A high proportion of pupils come from 'out of catchment'. This means that parents are choosing this school in preference to schools nearer to where they live.
- The headteacher is an appointed local leader of education (LLE)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing by:
 - making sure that they always take care to produce their best handwriting
 - making sure that pupils do not make careless mistakes in their spelling
 - making sure that pupils check and improve their spelling of commonly used words.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with expected skills for their age. In such a small school, this varies widely from year to year. What does not vary is that pupils consistently leave at the end of Year 6 having always met expectations and often exceeded them.
- Every achievement is recognised and celebrated. What matters most to pupils and their parents is keenly promoted, be it academic achievement, artistic or sporting prowess.
- The school spends the extra funding provided for pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding appropriately on extra support. This helps these pupils to achieve at least as well as all other pupils. Some of these pupils are gifted or talented and the extra funding is being very well used to make sure that these gifts and talents are developed. The tiny proportion who qualify for this support makes any comparison between the attainment of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others in the school statistically unreliable.
- The primary school sport funding is exceptionally well used to give pupils as many different sporting opportunities as possible. This helps them to have quality coaching and enjoy participating successfully in many sporting events and tournaments. Sport and exercise are exceptionally well promoted and nearly all pupils are keen to participate.
- Parents are very happy with the progress their children are making. Every respondent to 'Parent View' would recommend this school to other parents. Every parent the inspector spoke with felt the school was providing everything they wanted for their children.
- Overall, the most able pupils achieve well. All of these pupils' attainment exceeds the national average in English and mathematics. However, none go a step further to reach a standard more commonly expected of pupils a few years older (this is known as National Curriculum Level 6). This year there has been a big drive to identify potential as early as possible and to give extra support to some of the most able pupils to give them the best possible chance of achieving level 6. Looking at pupils' work and checking assessment evidence, there can be confidence in predicting that (starting from this year) more and more pupils are going to get much better than average results when they are tested.
- In 2013, Year 1 pupils gained broadly average standards in the national phonics screening check.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average in 2013, with many pupils exceeding the national expectations. Pupils did better in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above average in 2013 and have been for several years. Most pupils reached a higher than average standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This included pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- Overall, pupils make good progress. It is better in reading and mathematics than it is in writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work is skilfully adapted to meet the very varied ages and abilities of pupils in each class. It is made very clear to each pupil what they should be aiming to achieve in each lesson. The marking of their work makes clear reference to whether they have succeeded in what they set out to do, even though it too often ignores minor indiscretions such as careless mistakes and handwriting that falls below the best that pupils can produce.
- Pupils respect their teachers and teachers respect their pupils. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Expectations of good behaviour are clearly evident and pupils nearly always meet these.
- Great care is taken to ensure that expectations of each individual are realistic and that all pupils, including the most able, are given work that suitably challenges them. In this way, they all share equality of opportunity. Despite this, teachers are exploring ways in which they can challenge the most able even further.
- Staff keep in close touch with parents about their children's learning. Parents know what their

children are being taught and how they can contribute to their children's learning. A sensible amount of homework is set for pupils and it is realistically demanding.

- Classrooms are tidy and stimulating. Great care is taken to display pupils' best work prominently, alongside just the right amount of information to help pupils to learn from displays. This is particularly effective in promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Social and moral values are constantly reinforced. Pupils are encouraged to work positively and productively together when appropriate and they are expected to behave well.
- Some staff do not sufficiently understand the little things that can make big differences. It is all very well for pupils to demonstrate their understanding of similes, homophones and analogy and to write wonderfully imaginative pieces of work, but the full impact is lost when their handwriting veers towards the erratic and is littered with very simple spelling and punctuation errors that are not sufficiently picked up in marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils welcome visitors and are inquisitive and curious about why they have visited. They are friendly, helpful and extremely supportive of the school.
- The main reason why behaviour is not judged to be outstanding is that some pupils do not always try their best to fulfil their potential. A few are a bit complacent and settle on being good rather than excellent. This is very evident when their work is looked at and a 'don't care' attitude can be detected in some pieces of writing.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are constantly supported to understand what can go wrong when they misuse computers and smartphones. What is good is that they are given good advice but not made fearful.
- Attendance is exceptionally good. Pupils love coming to school. Parents and pupils are unanimous in saying that this is a friendly school where children are particularly well behaved, kept safe and happy and get on well with one another. This is why so many parents of children, often from many miles away, choose to send their children here.
- There is a bit of naughtiness but not a shred of nastiness in the school.
- There is no record of any need for exclusion and any unpleasantness between pupils is very rare.
- Older pupils are keen to look after younger ones and take pride in setting a good example to them.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- A very effective governing body keeps a very close check on a very effective headteacher.
- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher has been recognised by the local authority and, as a result, her skills are increasingly being used to help other schools in the locality to improve.
- Governors have made it very clear that the well-being of the children at Long Marton is their main concern but have realised that sharing the supreme qualities of their headteacher with other schools can help them to improve their school by reducing the problem of serving an otherwise isolated community.
- Everything that is possible is done to ensure that the national curriculum is strongly promoted. Excellence in that which is measured in statutory tests never get in the way of providing pupils with tasks that inspire and excite them. Individual gifts and talents are celebrated. Talents are strongly promoted and gifts increasingly so. Pupils gain great credibility through sporting and artistic achievement. Nearly every pupil is given an equal opportunity to achieve to their full potential.
- There is a strong drive to improve teaching and learning. Teachers are regularly observed by the headteacher as a part of their performance management and appraisal. They are given good advice about how they can get better. The targets they are set to improve their practice are

suitably challenging and closely linked to expected teaching standards and the school improvement plan.

- Over the past year, the headteacher has become increasingly involved in leadership and management duties in other schools. The governing body is closely monitoring the situation and is coming to the conclusion that this is no bad thing because it is opening up opportunities for other staff to take on more responsibility within the school and make a greater contribution to what could be considered middle management.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Minor recording issues were raised with the school and quickly rectified during the inspection.
- Communication with parents is outstanding. Weekly newsletters are immensely valued and parents love the way that they are told about what their children are going to be learning about each half term and how they can contribute.
- The local authority recognises this as a school that has as much to give as receive. The school is happy that if it wants help it will be available and the local authority respects the fact that the leaders, managers and governors of this school can contribute to the improvement of many others.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- A totally committed governing body makes sure that the school at the heart of their community serves it well. The governing body is truly representative of what the school aspires to be. There is dedication amongst governors to keep up to date with rapid changes in education and keeping children safe. Governors have been especially vigilant in making sure that the headteacher's increasingly broadening role in the local authority is not to the detriment of the school. They are being increasingly reassured that it is not. The budget is tight but is managed exceptionally well. There is a certain maxim that a little of what is best is better than a lot of what is ordinary. Nearly all the staffing budget is spent on teachers. Governors rigorously check on the performance of the headteacher, staff and pupils and challenge the headteacher relentlessly; she always answers their questions convincingly and to their satisfaction. Governors are very good at using their personal skills and expertise to support the school. Their wide range of expertise and experience, outside education, brings many benefits to the school.

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	112182
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	439562

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvonne Lake
Headteacher	Rachel Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2009
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