

Nelson Castercliff Community Primary School

Marsden Hall Road North, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 8JJ

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The school's work to safeguard pupils is inadequate. Leaders' and governors' checks on safeguarding fail to meet government requirements.
- Pupils in all year groups across the school make inadequate progress. Standards by Year 6 in English and mathematics have been very low for several years and show too little sign of improving.
- Pupils' key numeracy and literacy skills are poor. They do not use and apply them well enough in other subjects.
- Teaching is inadequate. Expectations are too low. The most able pupils are not challenged enough. Pupils' work and progress are not properly checked.
- Pupils' achievement is held back in a range of subjects because the tasks that teachers plan do not build successfully on pupils' previous knowledge.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because in lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good. They do not always listen to their teachers and pupils' work is often poorly presented.
- A record of decline in the school's performance since the last inspection reflects the inadequate ability of the leadership to make the necessary improvements.
- Leaders have failed to ensure adequate procedures are in place for checking and improving the performance of teachers. Methods for tracking pupils' progress are weak, consequently, both teaching and achievement have fallen to inadequate levels.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account sufficiently, or challenge them robustly enough about the school's performance, including the impact of the pupil premium funding.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are attending school more regularly and attendance rates are now above average.
- There is strong care and support for pupils and families experiencing difficulties.
- The recently appointed headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses and has started to make improvements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority as well as with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors examined the school’s documentation relating to pupils’ progress, school self-evaluation and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. They carried out a scrutiny of pupils’ work in their books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- They took account of the 14 parent responses received at the time of the inspection from the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, the views of the parents the governors had spoken to at a recent open evening and those the inspectors spoke to informally during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Bramwell	Additional Inspector
Carol Machell	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportions of pupils who are from a minority ethnic background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language have increased and are above average. Pupils come from varying backgrounds with Eastern European being the largest group.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met, including that school records contain all the required information including that staff identity checks have been completed.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, thus enabling pupils to make at least good progress in their learning, by ensuring that:
 - any inadequate teaching that exists is eradicated
 - teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - all teachers insist that pupils present their work to a high standard, are fully attentive in all lessons and that their attitudes to learning are always good
 - teachers use the targets they set for the pupils regularly and rigorously in order to check how well pupils learn
 - teaching challenges all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, so they learn at a faster rate and reach the higher levels of which they are capable
 - teachers check pupils' work and their progress accurately and regularly, mark their books carefully and use the information from this to plan work that meet pupils' varying ages and abilities
 - pupils with special educational needs are provided with work which is matched to their abilities and challenges them to achieve their best.

- Rapidly improve standards of attainment and pupils' progress in English and mathematics by ensuring that all groups of pupils:
 - use and apply key literacy and numeracy skills, including phonic skills, regularly in other subjects
 - make secure and brisk progress in developing the skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation and use these skills consistently to improve their reading and writing
 - make at least good progress in mathematics, particularly pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, by addressing the gaps in their understanding of mathematical language
 - apply their mathematical skills to real-life problems
 - extend their speaking, listening, writing and mathematical skills in Reception.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, in order to rapidly drive forward improvements in teaching, achievement and in keeping pupils safe by:
 - ensuring leaders and governors are clear about their responsibility for checking on and managing the performance of teachers, including setting clear targets for pupils' achievement so teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make and weak teaching is eradicated
 - ensuring that methods for checking on and evaluating pupils' progress are firmly in place and that the resulting information is accurate and used carefully to set clear and relevant steps needed to improve teaching and pupils' achievement
 - making sure the ways in which the development of knowledge and skills is planned for in each subject builds securely on what pupils already know and can do
 - building leadership at all levels and providing the opportunity for senior and middle leaders to contribute fully to the leadership of subjects and aspects of the school's work
 - developing the skills of governors so that they can effectively hold leaders to account and challenge them robustly enough about the school's performance, including the impact of the pupil premium funding.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in speaking, listening and social skills. In 2013, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was much lower than the national figure. This is because opportunities for children to extend their reading, writing and mathematics skills are limited. Therefore, achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate.
- Pupils' learning and progress have been inadequate in Years 1 to 6 over the past three years and continue to be so due to teachers' low expectations and too much inadequate teaching. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has been consistently low in English and mathematics for the last three years. The school is not doing enough to close the gaps in order to exceed the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Learning and progress in all year groups are currently too slow to raise attainment from a very low base. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the quality of work that pupils produce add to pupils' earlier underachievement and, as a result, pupils are continuing to fall even further behind.
- The national reading screening checks in the past two years show Year 1 pupils' skills in linking letters with the sounds they make (phonics) are improving. However, this did not bring improvements to pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 in 2013 when attainment was significantly below average in reading as well as in writing and mathematics. This represents inadequate progress from these pupils' individual starting points.
- The past underachievement of the present Year 6 pupils means that pupils have much to do to catch up on many literacy and numeracy skills. They are not doing so rapidly enough. Standards remain low, with too few reaching or exceeding the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are not adequately prepared with the skills needed to do well in the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' writing shows recent improvement in some classes but their spelling is often weak because they do not consistently apply phonics knowledge when writing. Punctuation and grammar weaknesses also impair the quality of writing for some pupils of all abilities.
- In mathematics, too many pupils have lost ground in earlier years and are still not making the progress they should. Pupils, and particularly pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, often have gaps in their basic arithmetic skills and in their understanding of mathematical language. This restricts their ability to apply their numeracy skills to other subjects. The most able pupils are often not challenged well enough, while work is sometimes too hard or not suitable for lower-attaining pupils. As a result, they make too little progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also underachieve. Though small-group teaching is provided where needed, they are not making enough progress because they do not transfer the skills they are learning in phonics to improve their spelling and punctuation skills in writing well enough. As a result, writing standards remain low for these pupils.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, underachieve despite this extra funding. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 were about four terms behind other pupils in the standards they reached in mathematics, about two terms behind in writing and broadly the same in reading. The standards they reach overall are well below those reached of similar pupils nationally and their progress is inadequate.
- School information and inspection evidence show that the rate of progress of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals throughout the year groups is typically slower than those pupils who are not eligible and the gap is showing little evidence of closing quickly enough.
- Different groups of pupils do not achieve as well as they ought and, overall, pupils make inadequate progress compared to pupils nationally, therefore the school's promotion of equal opportunities to learn is inadequate.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because, since the last inspection, pupils have made too little progress in their learning. Pupils' books show too little learning, over the past year, for most pupils. This is because teaching activities have not been consistently planned carefully enough to meet pupils' abilities and needs. The poor presentation of work by some pupils has not been challenged by teachers or leaders.
- Since the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching has declined and its impact upon pupils' achievement over time has been inadequate. As a result, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have limited pupils' progress. Literacy and numeracy skills have not been taught systematically enough so pupils have too many gaps in their learning, particularly in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Too often, pupils of all abilities are set the same task. As a result, the work set for some pupils is too hard; for others, it is too easy.
- Major shortcomings, particularly in the teaching of writing and mathematics, are revealed in pupils' books. Too many teachers repeatedly set pupils a range of unchallenging tasks so their ability to apply writing and mathematical skills, for example, or to write at length or to solve problems in other subjects develops too slowly.
- Teachers have expected too little of pupils in the past and this is still evident in some classes. Work in pupils' books over the last 12 months shows that there is often too little work covered and that pupils are not challenged to reach a higher standard, for example in presenting their work or in being persistent if they encounter a problem. The most able pupils are not challenged enough and consequently make too little progress.
- Targets for pupils to use to improve their work are displayed in books but there is little evidence of how these are used by the pupils to help them to improve their learning.
- Pupils' work has not been consistently marked and assessed since the last inspection. Furthermore, too many teachers plan work for pupils without accurate information about what they already know and understand. The result is that pupils are still unsure what to improve upon and teaching is not adequately planned to address what pupils must do next to progress in their learning.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not make the progress of which they are capable because adults' expectations of what the children can achieve are too low. They do not develop children's ideas, conversations and suggestions well enough.
- Relationships in classes between pupils and teachers are positive and this is encouraging pupils' personal and social development. Teachers are injecting some enjoyment into learning and they manage pupils' behaviour adequately. Pupils say they like their teachers but do not fully understand that they could do better. The views of one pupil reflect this, 'I enjoy lessons; teachers are kind though sometimes the work is too easy.'
- Some teachers are working hard to recover lost ground, for example when pupils were excited to be learning about the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction or in a science lesson where they discussed the meaning of 'nocturnal'. In these lessons, learning is at least good. However, there is currently too little of this high calibre of learning in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. The records the school keeps do not show clearly enough that the required checks on the identity of staff who work at the school have been completed in line with safeguarding requirements. Some information that should be included in these records is missing because of historical administrative errors.
- During the inspection, staff attempted to rectify these omissions but there remains work to be done to ensure that the school's actions to safeguard pupils meet the necessary requirements.
- School policies for child protection and safeguarding are up to date. Staff training in keeping pupils safe has been undertaken. Pupils say they feel safe, and they have a clear understanding of how to keep safe on the roads and when using computers. Those parents the inspectors spoke to or those who responded to the Parent View questionnaire said that their children feel

safe and happy in school.

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. During the inspection, most pupils generally behaved well in lessons and got on with their work. However, a few did not and the poor presentation of work seen in their books is testament to a lack of commitment from some pupils to doing their best. Furthermore, pupils say a few pupils do not always listen to the adults and, when this happens, it puts them all off their learning.
- Around school, pupils generally conduct themselves sensibly and are responsible and helpful. The atmosphere during the inspection was calm and orderly in the playground and at lunchtimes. There have been no exclusions of pupils from the school.
- Attendance is rapidly improving and is currently above the national average and higher than it has been since the last inspection. This is because leaders no longer agree to pupils taking holidays in term time.
- Pupils say there is some bullying but this, and any minor disagreements, are soon sorted out. Pupils have a sound knowledge of different types of bullying. For example, they say some pupils use the word 'gay' to tease others without understanding the meaning. However, one pupil explained teachers have helped them to understand that 'everyone's different and that's fine'.
- School systems to record and monitor any instances of bullying are in place and are regularly reviewed by senior leaders.
- Pupils say 'there's a lot on offer for us to enjoy in our school' such as the breakfast club and a wide range of sporting opportunities which 'helps us to be healthy and happy'.
- Adults provide strong support for those pupils and families experiencing difficult circumstances or those recently arrived from other countries.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not secured the improvements set out at the last inspection. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have declined and measures to keep pupils safe are inadequate. As a result, leadership and management are inadequate.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2013. She has accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses, and through determined and clear leadership has started to make improvements. However, she has been unable to bring about the extensive required improvements in the two terms since her appointment. Furthermore, the roles of other senior and middle leaders are underdeveloped. In recent years, they have not had enough opportunities to develop their leadership skills in order to make an effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching or raising pupils' achievement in the subjects or aspects of the school's work that they manage. Consequently, improvements are still too fragile and too slow. As a result, the ability to drive improvement forward rapidly enough is too limited.
- Arrangements to review the school's performance are inadequate. Methods for checking on and evaluating pupils' progress have not been properly established until this school year. There is still much work to do to ensure that the resulting information is accurate and used well enough. This is in order to ensure clear and relevant steps to improve teaching and pupils' achievement are identified and incorporated into the school improvement plan.
- The leadership of teaching is inadequate. Over recent years, leaders and governors have not tackled weaknesses in the quality of teaching robustly enough. Arrangements to manage the performance of staff over time have been too weak. Teachers told inspectors that it is only in this school year that the process to check their performance has been formalised. Even so, leaders and governors are not yet clear enough about their responsibility for checking on and managing the performance of teachers, and for setting clear targets for pupils' achievement so teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make. As a result, weak teaching is yet to be eradicated.
- The new primary school physical education and sports funding is managed well. The fund has been used profitably to provide additional activities and has increased pupil participation in a wide range of sports and promoted their physical well-being well. Senior leaders and governors

are beginning to measure the impact of the fund on pupils' learning.

- Through a wide range of clubs and opportunities to learn about the religions and lifestyles of people other than themselves, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been extended well. For example, pupils say 'having people from different countries in our school is very interesting.'
- Over the longer term, leaders have not ensured that the planning of different subjects (the curriculum) effectively meets pupils' needs. For example, the most able pupils are not sufficiently stretched. The learning of those pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding has not been sufficiently checked to ensure they learn as well as they could.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and procedures for child protection do not meet requirements.
- The local authority has provided much support to improve leadership and governance and leaders and governors are grateful for this, however, despite this action, the school's decline has not been halted.
- The leadership of the headteacher is fostering good relations among all groups of pupils and parents. Staff say, 'in the past we worked in isolation, now we pull together as a team.'
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is ineffective. The governing body has not kept the performance of the school sufficiently in check since the last inspection. Governors have not challenged senior leaders well enough, and actions to improve the school have been ineffective. Governors have the will to succeed and are keen for the school to improve. However, they have been over reliant on information given to them by the headteacher to form their view of the school's effectiveness, including the quality of teaching. They have not yet received sufficient training, or put the processes in place, to check it well enough for themselves. The governing body has only recently established rigorous procedures to manage the performance of teachers so pay awards are now linked to pupils' progress. Governors do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements because the checks on the suitability of the adults working with pupils are not fully secure. Governors know how pupil premium and school sport funding are spent and of the increased confidence staff now have when teaching physical education. They are not fully aware of the impact that the pupil premium funding is having on pupils' achievement.

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	119281
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	442396

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	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Hubbert
Headteacher	Victoria Milne
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
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