

# Leven Valley CofE Primary School

Backbarrow, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 8QF

**Inspection dates** 1–2 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Leven Valley is a happy and harmonious school. It provides a caring and supportive environment in which pupils make good progress from their starting points so that by the end of Year 6 they reach above average standards.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic. They ensure that all pupils are inspired to learn through exciting lessons.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are eager to learn and their behaviour in and outside classrooms is consistently good.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school, a view shared by their parents.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of exciting experiences, including clubs during and after school, and local and residential visits. It makes a very positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher provides effective leadership. He has developed a strong staff team, committed to improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment.
- Governors work closely with school leaders and provide good levels of support and challenge to support improvements effectively.
- Parents are very supportive. They hold the school in high regard.
- Attendance is well above average.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it could be because teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length in subjects other than English, nor is their work always presented neatly enough.
- Teachers do not always refocus or adjust their teaching and activities well enough to ensure learning moves on at a consistently good rate.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' marking or to correct and learn from their mistakes.
- The school development plan is not sufficiently well structured to ensure that the school's effectiveness rapidly becomes outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to three pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and all teachers. The inspector had a discussion with one representative from the local authority and four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Discussions were held with parents who brought their children to school.
- The inspector took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, along with 28 printed versions of the online questionnaire and the outcomes of conversations with parents during the inspection.
- The inspector also considered the views expressed in the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

## Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Leven Valley C of E is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- Virtually all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time is well above average.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. This is because there were not enough pupils to make such a comparison meaningful.

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

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' attainment, particularly in writing by:
  - providing pupils with more well-planned opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
  - checking learning in lessons and reshaping activities, if necessary, so that pupils are given the challenge they need and can move on to the next steps in learning more quickly
  - ensuring pupils correct and improve their work by acting on the guidance in their teachers' marking.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' work by ensuring expectations of how pupils present their work in all subjects are consistently high.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring the plan for improvement includes measurable targets that will help gauge the success of action that is taken.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Levels of attainment on entry to the Reception class and at the end of each key stage can vary widely year-on-year.
- Generally, the majority of children start school with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age in all areas of learning except for communication, reading and writing. These are below that typically expected for their age.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress especially in speaking, reading and writing so that by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is average. This is because of the well-organised and vibrant Early Years Foundation Stage learning areas and the skill and enthusiasm of the teacher and her team to provide activities which capture children's imaginations and interests.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are generally above average on entry to Key Stage 2.
- At Key Stage 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics dipped in 2013 from being above average in 2011 and 2012 to average. This was due to the small number of pupils in the cohort and its composition.
- At Key Stage 2 the school's predictions for pupils' standards have been accurate for the previous three years. Projections for 2014 indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics will be well above the 2013 national average. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and an analysis of internal school performance data and most recent results of the 2014 National Curriculum testing data confirm the school's view.
- Inspection evidence shows that the rate at which pupils make progress throughout the school, especially in Key Stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics is continuing to improve rapidly. As a result, standards are improving.
- Reading is given a high profile by the school and parents provide strong support for their children's reading at home. As a result, pupils develop a love of reading. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'Reading fills my quiet moments. I picture the characters, bring them to life in my head and become them.'
- Pupils enjoy writing. By the end of Year 6, their writing is often vibrant, helped by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts their vocabulary. However, they do not have enough opportunities to engage in extended writing activities in subjects other than English. As a result, the skills required to reach the higher levels are not sufficiently well developed. Some pupils do not, therefore, make the progress nor attain those standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils are generally proud of their achievements. However, pupils do not always present their work neatly, particularly their written work. Not all teachers have consistently high expectations of how pupils present their work in all subjects.
- The school promotes and checks that all pupils have equal opportunities. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make progress similar to that of their classmates.
- In 2013, the number of most able pupils was too small to make meaningful comparisons with the national average. However, inspection evidence shows that the proportion of pupils being identified as being most able is increasing and that most of the work given is at a good level of challenge. As a result, a relatively high proportion of pupils were entered for the Level 6 national tests in reading and mathematics.
- The pupil premium is spent wisely on, for example, one-to-one tuition and employing additional teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress and reach standards similar to their classmates. Inspection evidence and the school's data show that this is set to continue.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Pupils make good gains in their learning because teaching is effective. Teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, plan lessons that interest and engage pupils so that they want to learn.
- All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships so that pupils' personal development is fostered effectively and behaviour is managed successfully.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to ensure that work is well-matched to pupils' varying abilities. They are clear about what pupils already know and make sure that the work in lessons builds on this knowledge and helps those of all abilities to make good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work. Skilled and focused questioning enables teachers to assess pupils' learning swiftly. On occasions they use this information to reshape activities and provide further challenge to move learning on. For example, in a Year 5 and Year 6 mathematics lesson on probability a prompt response from the teacher on checking the success of a group of the most able pupils resulted in them being given a higher level of challenge. Hence, no time was lost in their learning. However, this practice is not always used well enough throughout the school and as a result, progress occasionally slows when work is either too easy or too hard.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm results in clear, precise and lively explanations which capture pupils' interests and promote understanding.
- Throughout the school pupils are given interesting and imaginative opportunities to apply and develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills to real-life activities. However, they are not provided with enough opportunities to engage in extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good. It carefully explains what pupils are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Marking is most effective when pupils are encouraged to correct their errors and respond to teachers' comments. However, this practice is not applied consistently across the school and, as a result, some pupils continue to make the same errors.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They have a good understanding of their role in the classroom and provide valuable support for pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are immensely proud of their school and to be a part of it. They love coming to school. This is reflected in the well-above average level of attendance.
- Kindness, courtesy and respect are hallmarks of the school. They are reinforced through assemblies, lessons and playground activities. As a result, there are very few recorded instances of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is praised by contractors who transport the many pupils who live in remote rural areas to and from the school.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. This is because pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning and display high levels of perseverance when working in groups or as individuals. They respond immediately to the guidance and direction given by staff and as a result, time for learning is rarely lost. However, occasionally when the activities set are too easy or, for some too difficult, pupils sometimes become a little restless.
- Despite the age differences within classes, pupils work extremely well together and show a genuine delight at the success of others, as well as their own achievement. Pupils settle quickly to activities and enjoy the challenges of new work. They are confident enough during discussion to ask their teacher for clarification and delight in the opportunities to share their own views.
- Pupils relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities. The school council says that teachers listen to them and they feel that they have a voice in determining some school initiatives and developments. They enjoy acting as ambassadors when escorting visitors around the school serving teas at the many school and community events.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They are cared for extremely well and given appropriate guidance about avoiding risk and danger. For example, pupils are reminded frequently about safer use of the internet and social media. They are fully aware of the inherent dangers on the road and the nearby river.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are overwhelmingly confident in school staff to deal with any concerns they may have.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and its different types. They and their parents say such behaviour is extremely rare. However, pupils are clear what to do should any incidents occur. They know that any member of staff will listen to them if they are concerned about anything. School records confirm this.
- Excellent support is provided for pupils entering the school at various times throughout the year. As a result, they settle quickly and achieve as well as others. This has been very much the case this year as increasing numbers of parents have transferred their children to the school from other local schools, and some which are further afield.

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

- The headteacher shows a passion and unwavering commitment to the school.
- He has drawn on the small school atmosphere very effectively to build a strong team who aspire to be outstanding teachers. All teachers take on subject responsibilities. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects they lead and contribute effectively to improving the quality of teaching across the school and raising standards across the curriculum.
- The headteacher uses a range of approaches, including the rigorous evaluation of data on pupils' achievements and observing teachers at work, to check on the effectiveness of teaching. The monitoring of teaching is followed by clear guidance on how to improve and, where appropriate, a successful programme of training and coaching.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The school's plan for development sets realistic but ambitious targets. It is regularly reviewed by staff and governors and helps the school to move forward. However, there are too few measurable milestones to help provide assurances that the school is moving in the right direction to take its effectiveness to outstanding.
- The curriculum is exciting and captures pupils' interests. The school organises learning through exciting topics through which reading, writing and mathematics are threaded. The curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced and enriched through a wide range of clubs and activities to provide musical, creative and sporting opportunities. At the time of the inspection pupils were revelling in every second of the rehearsals for the regular end-of-year musical production composed by one of the members of staff.
- The school makes effective use of the additional primary school sports funding. Money is spent on increasing opportunities for inter-school sport, extending the range of in-school and after-school activities and for staff to work alongside specialist coaches to develop their own skills.
- There are excellent links with parents. Virtually all parents who responded to the online and paper version of Parent View or came to a discussion at the start of the school day reported that they were exceptionally pleased with the education, care and support their children receive.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school which has helped leaders to make sure that their view of the school's effectiveness is accurate. The school works effectively with a range of other schools in the local area to share training and to check the accuracy of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. They are ambitious for the school and very proud of its achievements. They visit regularly, keep teaching and learning at the centre of their attention, and ensure the focus of their visits is always linked to the school's improvement plan. They have a good understanding of how to monitor pupils' progress and achievement using all the available evidence and regularly ask challenging questions about all aspects of school life. Meetings focus on

evaluating improvements in teaching and pupils' attainment and progress. Governors use this information well to review the performance and pay progression of staff. They have a clear understanding of the school's finances, including pupil premium funding and the primary school sport funding. Governors check that this spending benefits the pupils. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory 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>	112356
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	444013

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Lawler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Nicol
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 531365
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