

Norman Street Primary School

Norman Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2BQ

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- From their typically low starting points, pupils achieve well to reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Good teaching helps the majority of pupils of all abilities to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the supportive and effective teaching they receive.
- Behaviour is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils say they feel safe.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher and senior leaders is very effective. Together they have implemented many changes that have raised successfully pupils' achievement and improved the quality of teaching.
- Members of the governing body are very effective. They use their considerable skills and expertise very well to provide strategic direction for this improving school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics have not always been taught thoroughly or built on systematically as pupils moved from year to year. As a result, some pupils lack confidence to solve problems.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are not always high enough.
- Pupils do not always respond to the suggestions for improvements that teachers make when they mark their work.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles and are not yet fully involved in monitoring the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching in their subjects. As a result, the impact of their actions is not fully effective.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors took account of 68 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 20 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils from Year 6 and members of the school council. They also talked to pupils informally at break times and lunchtimes and with parents at the start and end of the school day. They had discussions with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. In addition, they met with leaders who have other responsibilities, including the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the leaders of literacy and numeracy.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including internal and external information relating to pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, school improvement planning and the school's view of how well it is doing. They also considered documents relating to teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, and safeguarding and child protection information.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Frank Cain

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Norman Street Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There have been significant changes in staffing throughout the school in recent years, including at senior level.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further in order to raise standards higher, especially in mathematics, by:
 - checking that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are always high enough
 - embedding the changes to teaching mathematics, and checking that basic skills are built on year-on-year and pupils become more confident to use their skills to solve problems
 - making sure that in all subjects, pupils make the improvements suggested by teachers when they mark their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of newly appointed middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The skills of most of the children who start the Early Years Foundation Stage are low in comparison to what is typical for children of their age, particularly in language. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress because of the caring environment and good teaching. As a result, many are starting to reach the standards expected by the time they move to Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress and leave Key Stage 1 with standards that are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. As these pupils left the Early Years Foundation Stage with lower than expected levels, their current attainment shows good progress.
- This good progress continues through Key Stage 2 and accelerates in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach the standards expected, with many pupils having made more progress than expected from their individual starting points at the end of Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils write well and often at length in a range of subjects. The accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar is improving as more attention is given to the teaching of these skills.
- Reading is improving from an early age when pupils are taught successfully how to recognise letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Success can be seen in the results of the Year 1 screening check in phonics, with an above-average number of pupils meeting the required standard. Pupils use these skills successfully to tackle new words. Many enjoy reading throughout their time in Norman Street Primary and benefit from planned opportunities to read regularly in school. Pupils make good use of the well-stocked library.
- Overall, progress in mathematics is good and pupils reach the level expected for their age. However, many pupils make slower progress in mathematics throughout the school than in English. Basic mathematical skills have not always been taught thoroughly at an early age and then reinforced as pupils move from year to year. Although changes are in place and progress is accelerating, some pupils still have gaps in their skills that hamper their ability to solve problems.
- The most able pupils make good progress as a result of the high expectations in English. Although expectations in mathematics are occasionally not high enough, by the time these pupils leave school they have achieved well because they have mastered the key skills they need. They are supported well and given work which challenges them. Some pupils are beginning to be entered for the high Level 6 in national tests.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. The school's data on pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics show that the gaps between the achievement of these pupils and others in the school have closed in Key Stage 1 and are closing quickly in Key Stage 2. Attainment as they leave school is now approximately one term behind that of other pupils in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils. This is because their learning needs are identified and their progress is checked regularly to make sure that the support they are receiving is working.
- Regular checks by the senior leaders on the progress pupils make ensure that, overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress and have the opportunity to perform equally well. This shows the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and has improved as a result of the well-informed actions of school leaders following a period of significant changes in staffing. This good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Well-planned and interesting activities enthuse pupils. This was evident in Year 5 in

mathematics, when pupils successfully predicted and tested the length of elastic that a doll would need to safely bungee jump off a range of different American landmarks.

- Teachers use their knowledge of how well pupils have done to plan activities that match the needs of different groups of pupils. This means that for most of the time, pupils have work that challenges them and extends their learning. This is not always the case in mathematics when, at times, tasks are too easy or too hard for the different abilities, which slows learning.
- Teaching ensures activities capture pupils' interests in writing so that they learn effectively and are eager writers. They are taught successfully how to adapt their writing to suit a range of different purposes and audiences. Many enjoy writing at length.
- Reading is taught well with many opportunities for pupils to read. A large choice of books leads to pupils reading widely and many talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors.
- Changes to the sequence for teaching mathematics are starting to improve pupils' basic skills in this subject as they move from year to year. This system is accelerating progress, especially as pupils move into Years 5 and 6. However, it is not yet fully embedded to ensure pupils always have a firm foundation of skills and the confidence to apply them to more complex problems.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide them with detailed information about where they have done well and where they could improve. However, teachers do not make sure that pupils routinely respond to these suggestions and so some pupils continue to make the same mistakes or fail to learn how their work could be better.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They understand the learning needs of the pupils they work with and successfully support and guide them to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. They come to school keen to learn and use their time in school very productively. Older pupils are confident and capable young people who, by the end of Year 6, are very well prepared for the next phase of their education.
- Pupils make the most of the many opportunities to be active and understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They appreciate the range of clubs and activities available to them. All pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder, the violin and the clarinet.
- Pupils, including the most able, typically try their best to do whatever their teachers ask of them. They persevere and present their work neatly. Interest can wane if tasks fail to challenge them.
- The school's systems for managing pupils' behaviour and promoting good conduct are effective. Pupils say that they know how to behave well and expect others to behave equally well.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying and that if any occurred, it would be dealt with swiftly. They are well aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Pupils take on roles of responsibility such as being play leaders and charity superstars who organise fundraising activities and events. They take their responsibilities very seriously and carry out their duties conscientiously. There is also an effective school council.
- Attendance is average and has improved as a result of the hard work of the school, and pupils attend school on time. Persistent absenteeism has declined dramatically in recent years.
- Pupils take a real pride in their appearance and are very proud of their uniforms.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are given a high priority and managed well. Pupils say they feel safe and parents agree their children are secure in school.
- Pupils display a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. Pupils are taught to avoid contact with strangers and look carefully for visitors' badges worn by adults that they do not recognise.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides effective leadership and is ably supported by a new, but equally determined, senior leadership team, and by a capable governing body. Together, leaders have successfully guided the school through a period of change in staffing at all levels.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development and produce carefully thought-out plans to drive forward necessary improvements. Changes have been most effective in raising attainment and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The new leadership team is now secure and the school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Senior leaders carry out regular checks on teaching and pupils' progress and have an accurate view of the school's performance. Teachers are provided with training where improvements are needed. Success is more evident in the teaching of reading and writing than in mathematics. However, leaders spotted that changes were needed and decided to adopt a more structured approach to teaching mathematics. Although not yet fully embedded, this is starting to improve pupils' progress.
- There are clear links between the management of teachers' performance and their professional development. Their teaching is checked by leaders and arrangements for pay and promotion are informed by the quality of their work and the progress made by pupils.
- Middle leaders are very new to their role. They are not yet fully effective because their role in monitoring pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching is not fully established. As a result, they do not have a full picture of what they need to do to further improve teaching and learning in their subjects.
- The curriculum is organised very well with a good focus on developing pupils' basic skills in English and an improving picture in mathematics. An impressive range of educational visits and visitors enrich learning. Pupils really appreciate their residential visits. The end of topic theme days or events, such as the Australia and India days, are much enjoyed by parents and guests.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils respect the views of others; they have a good knowledge of their world from local to global scales and of the different cultures that exist within it.
- The new primary school sport funding is used well to provide additional activities for pupils and to improve the teaching of physical education. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities including American football and Bollywood dancing. A new programme successfully increases self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning through sports.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided much appreciated effective support in recent years, especially in helping the school through significant changes in staffing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. Governors are determined to help the school to improve further. They are well informed about all aspects of the school, in particular achievement and the quality of teaching. They review data, check the school's performance closely and challenge school leaders in order to promote further school improvement.
 - The governing body possesses a good range of skills, which they use to good effect in carrying out their roles. Where there are gaps in their knowledge, they actively seek to recruit governors with the necessary skills and also make sure that they receive appropriate training.
 - Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and are familiar with the Teachers' Standards. They use this information well to help manage teachers' performance and award pay increases linked to improvement.
 - Governors oversee the spending of the pupil premium funding and check its impact on pupils' achievement. Governors help plan the spending of the primary school sport funding and evaluate its effect on pupils' physical well-being and involvement in sport.

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	112219
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	431652

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	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Long
Headteacher	Mr Nick Page
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2012
Telephone number	01228 210168
Fax number	01228 607502
Email address	office@norman.cumbria.sch.uk

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