

# Askam Village School

Lots Road, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria LA16 7DA

<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- There are warm and positive relationships between everyone in this school, which create a welcoming atmosphere and a supportive environment for pupils.
- Leaders are successfully focused on improving outcomes for pupils so that they are well equipped to move on to the next stage of their education.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and set firm expectations of pupils' behaviour. The great majority of pupils show good attitudes to their learning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.
- Governors have an accurate picture of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They play a significant role in monitoring the work of senior leaders.
- Children in the early years make good progress from starting points that are broadly below those typical for their age. Teachers organise learning well to capture children's imaginations and develop the skills and knowledge they need to make as successful start to Year 1.
- Pupils' progress across the school is improving because of the actions taken by leaders to develop consistently good teaching.
- Pupils enjoy a range of extra activities, such as clubs, music events and sports competitions.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not achieve consistently well across key stages 1 and 2.
- While pupils read well, there are some who do not read widely enough, tending to stick to the type of book with which they are comfortable.
- Teachers do not challenge some pupils sufficiently, including the most able, in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not follow the school's feedback and marking policy consistently; consequently pupils do not always receive the information they need to make further progress.
- When leaders evaluate actions taken to improve teaching and learning, they are not always clear about the impact of those actions.
- Some features of the school's website do not comply with requirements.

## Full report

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

- Raise pupils' achievement further, so that standards continue to rise throughout key stages 1 and 2, by:
  - actively promoting variety in pupils' choice of reading books to ensure that they read more widely
  - consistently applying the school's feedback and marking policy so that all pupils can correct misconceptions and know what the next steps in their learning are
  - consistently providing a high level of challenge across all year groups and across all subjects, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve leaders' evaluation of the impact of actions they take to improve teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the school's website is up to date and complies with statutory requirements, especially in the area of governance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders are fully aware of the areas that need improvement in the school. Since the last inspection, effective action has resulted in good progress being made, especially in the early years and key stage 1. Where weaknesses remain, such as attainment at the end of key stage 2 (which is below national averages), strategies have been put in place so that shortcomings are being effectively remedied.
- Regular monitoring by leaders provides them with a generally accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning in the school; however, their evaluation of the impact of actions to improve teaching and learning is not always precise. Feedback to teachers identifies strengths and areas for development and informs further training. This monitoring has been especially effective in English and mathematics.
- Both phase and subject leaders are effective in managing their areas of responsibility. Clear strategies are in place to improve provision. Leadership of English, mathematics and key stage 2 is particularly strong.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The teaching of subjects such as science, geography, history and so on, provides good opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, in science, through investigation, they are able to understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence; while in geography, they develop the skills and knowledge needed to read grid references and to contrast different localities.
- Music and sport feature prominently and are a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to play a musical instrument and there is a dedicated music room with a range of instruments where they can practise independently. Young flautists, for example, perform in harmony well.
- The extra money provided by the government for physical education and sports has been used appropriately to support pupils' involvement in sport and to build up the confidence and skills of teaching staff. Participation in school and competitive sport has increased. Pupils regularly take part in sporting activities, including competitive gymnastics, swimming, athletics and football. They are rightly proud of their achievement in receiving the Sainsbury's Gold Award for school sports in the academic years 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Teachers plan a range of activities beyond religious education lessons and assemblies that supports this well. For example, children were amazed by the visit of the runner-up in this year's BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, who came to play the saxophone for them. They also take part in a range of educational visits that excite them and challenge their problem-solving skills. Pupils visit an outdoor centre to take part in mathematics problem-solving activities that include den-building and work on collaborative learning.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values well and pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of tolerance and respect for others. A racial equality display of pupils' work shows their understanding of the need to eliminate discrimination, especially that based on race, and promote equality of opportunity and good relations. Pupils' statements, such as 'there is only one race: human' reinforce this message. Other displays of work around the school show that pupils have been learning about and understand democracy and the rule of law.
- The performance management of teachers has supported improvements in teaching and learning. Leaders' monitoring informs specific and individual targets for teachers linked to pupils' outcomes, personal improvement and accountability. These are linked to a programme of continuous professional development. Teachers value the training they receive.
- The local authority and school partners, including a local leader of education, have provided good advice and support which have improved leadership of and provision in English and mathematics.
- The parents who spoke to inspectors and responded to the online questionnaire 'Parent View' were, in the vast majority of cases, highly supportive of the work of the school. They especially appreciated the care and good support that their children received. They were also appreciative about the regular information they received about the everyday life of the school and the achievements and progress of their children. They were particularly positive about the quality and range of clubs and enrichment opportunities outside school time. One parent commented, 'I could not be happier with how happy and settled my daughter is at school.'
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have received training on how to ask more searching questions of leaders in various contexts. They are developing their skills in this with some success and, as a result, they continue to become stronger in their challenge and support to school leaders.

- Governors monitor the work of the school more regularly now than in the past and they keep records of the outcomes of this process. They link up with individual subject leaders. Their membership of these meetings and their regular monitoring activities mean they are a regular presence in school.
- Governors have a clear view of the skills profile that they feel will make the governing body even more effective. Existing governors have skills and experience that include human resources and accountancy. They have identified that they would like to fill their two vacancies with people who have experience in building and education so as to broaden the range of skills.
- Governors are aware their section of the school’s website does not currently meet with statutory requirements. They have plans in place to address this.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on staff are thorough. There are good, clear processes for referrals to external agencies. All staff have received appropriate safeguarding training and are ever watchful for the well-being and safety of the pupils in their care.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Teachers are providing a greater level of challenge to pupils than in the past, which is contributing to the improving progress that they are making. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils had to use their reasoning and problem-solving skills to find calculations to a series of given answers. The teacher encouraged the most able pupils to think beyond using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and to try other functions such as cubing and factorials.
- Adults generally use effective questioning skills in lessons to ensure that pupils are challenged to think for themselves and to grapple with work that they find difficult at first. Adults are not content simply to give pupils the answers if they are stuck.
- Teachers across the school develop pupils’ mostly positive attitudes to work by their enthusiasm and their supportive manner. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and friendly. There is a very evident impression that, where the welfare and progress of pupils in the school are concerned, nothing is too much trouble for the adults.
- There is a good level of development of the spiritual aspects of pupils’ learning. This can be seen in the targeted use of praise to boost pupils’ self-esteem; in the planning of interesting and exciting activities, such as in art lessons; and in the array of clubs, activities, visitors to school and educational trips that adults organise.
- Leaders have understandably concentrated on improving achievement in English (and especially in writing) and mathematics. Their hard work is paying off, as pupils in the current year groups, including the most able pupils, are showing improving progress in these subjects. Pupils’ workbooks show a good development of the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers use assessment to plan future lessons and change their plans if they need to in order to tackle misconceptions. This means that pupils are able to make better progress in their learning. However, teachers are sometimes inconsistent in their use of the school’s marking and feedback policy. As a result, pupils do not always have the chance to correct mistakes or to respond to feedback about how to improve their work.
- Sometimes opportunities for problem solving and reasoning are not provided in mathematics lessons. In addition, there are, on occasion, some low-level activities in other subjects which present a more inconsistent degree of challenge.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good. Pupils make it clear through conversations with inspectors that they know how to keep safe and ways in which they could be at risk. A display also reminds them about how to keep safe on the internet. They also know that they can go to any of the adults in school if they need to share a concern. The care and devotion to the pupils that adults show makes school a place where pupils really want to be.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what they should do if they suffer it or witness it. They say that adults deal with incidents well, but that they do not happen very often. They also report that homophobic and racist bullying are rare, but are also dealt with well. One pupil was so surprised by an inspector’s question about racist attitudes that he suggested he went to look at the display of work about Martin Luther King to see what they had learned.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour and relationships at playtimes are positive. They show care and consideration for each other. They are attentive to each other's needs, if they get hurt while they are playing for example. Some low-level boisterousness is evident at breaktimes in key stage 1 but teachers manage it well and it rarely impinges on teaching and learning.
- Most pupils know that they need to give of their best in their school work. However, there is some variation in presentation and pride in their work, which indicates a slight inconsistency in their attitudes to learning at times.
- Previous fixed-term exclusions have reduced greatly. Attendance is monitored well and is currently about average.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Current pupils, including the most able and the few from disadvantaged backgrounds, are making good and improving progress overall in English and mathematics.
- There was an increase in the percentage of pupils in Year 1 who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2015. This figure was above the national average.
- In key stage 1, attainment has continued to rise, so that in 2015 standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with national averages. Standards are set to improve again in 2016. As children start in Nursery with skills, knowledge and experiences that are broadly below those that are typical for their age, this represents good progress.
- Because school leaders have been concentrating on improving English and mathematics, other subjects have been less of a focus. As a result there is less challenge provided to pupils in these areas. For example, some activities provide too much structure for pupils' writing across the curriculum. As a result, teachers do not encourage pupils to apply the knowledge and skills gained in English lessons to make their own decisions about how their writing should look in, for example, history work.
- Leaders have put a handwriting policy and scheme in place to ensure consistency across the school. While the improvements are visible, it is not yet consistently applied, as handwriting and presentation are of variable quality in some books.
- There have been good improvements in reading in recent years because of leaders' actions. Pupils generally read well. The more able pupils read with fluency and expression and can understand what they read. Many read for pleasure outside school. Pupils who are not as confident at reading show that they use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to help them with unfamiliar words. However, pupils tend to choose the kind of book they like and stick with that type when they choose new books. This limits pupils' ability to read more widely.
- The school has a clear policy for marking and feedback. However, it is not applied consistently. Where it is used well, pupils are given opportunities to correct mistakes or to try harder tasks. They are also told how to improve or what they need to learn next.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making steady progress when compared to other pupils in the school and are beginning to catch them up. However, this progress is not as strong as it could be because leaders are not yet focused sharply enough on what pupils need to achieve to show that the extra support they receive is working.

## Early years provision

is good

- When children arrive in Nursery they have skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age. They make good progress from their starting points so that by the time they begin Year 1, the majority of children have the skills they need to progress.
- The early years environment is bright, well organised and purposeful. Teachers and other staff have made their expectations of behaviour clear and children know class routines well. Teachers encourage children to take charge of their own learning whenever they can and to solve problem for themselves. For example, when one girl says she has spilt something, the teacher does not intervene, but asks her to get a tissue and wipe it.
- Teachers plan well to encourage the development of phonics knowledge and communication and language. These are key skills that support the improvement of writing at an early stage. They follow children's interests when they can to keep them excited about their learning. For example, the teacher in Reception extends the topic of mini-beasts into the next half-term because children are enjoying it. All of

them sit captivated as one boy proudly shows some recently hatched butterflies that he has brought from home. He talks about them with confidence.

- Behaviour in the early years is good. This is a direct result of the good organisation and clear expectations of behaviour that teachers and other adults demonstrate.
- While children in Nursery are occasionally less focused – especially boys – children’s learning overall is well organised and based in knowledge and skills such as reasoning, mathematical development and physical development.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has been increasing year on year. Last year the percentage was just above the national average at 68%. This figure is due to rise again this year.
- There are strong relationships with parents and with local external childcare providers. A number of responses in the Parent View online survey mention how well children have settled into Nursery this year and how happy parents are with the progress their children are making.
- Children are kept safe by the school’s very caring staff.
- The early years team recognises that boys are progressing less well than girls in the current cohort. They are focused on providing activities that will improve this position, with the aim of closing the gap in attainment as they did so successfully last year.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112409
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012188

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Graham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Newton
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 462 814
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.askam.cumbria.sch.uk">www.askam.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@askam.cumbria.sch.uk">office@askam.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 October 2014

## Information about this school

- Askam Village School is smaller than average in size. It has a Nursery which children attend in the morning only.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well below the national average. The pupil premium is extra money from the government to support pupils identified as being from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is not believed to be their first language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support in school for their special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is slightly above the national average.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of key stage 2.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governance on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in lessons in all classes of the school. One of these was a joint observation between the headteacher and the lead inspector. The headteacher was also present at inspector team meetings.
- Inspectors analysed pupil's writing and mathematics as well as their work in other subjects. They also examined the work of children in the early years.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary, plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, reports of visits by governors, local authority advisers and other external support and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions and conversations with members of staff, governors, parents, and pupils.
- Inspectors also evaluated responses received through Parent View (the online survey), the staff questionnaire and the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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