

Dane Ghyll School

Skelwith Drive, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 4PG

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- For too long, the school has rested on its laurels. Leaders, including governors, have had an overly rosy view of pupils' performance.
- The school's curriculum is disjointed. It does not ensure that pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects as they move through the classes.
- The school does not have up-to-date, reliable and detailed information about the progress and attainment of current cohorts, groups and individuals.
- Middle leadership is weak. Middle leaders have not been given the training, support and resources to carry out their roles effectively.
- The governing body has not had a deep enough understanding of the school's performance. Governors have failed to challenge leaders and ensure that all groups of pupils achieved well.
- Children's progress in early years is hampered by the limited learning opportunities afforded by the outdoor provision.
- Pupils, including the most able, do not make the strong progress of which they are capable. Teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils. Too often, tasks are too easy, repetitive and mundane. Sometimes, teachers' subject knowledge is too weak.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has made sure that staff and governors are in no doubt about the school's weaknesses and the urgency with which these must be eliminated.
- The headteacher has provided the impetus for change. Governors and staff support fully the sweeping changes he has made to ensure that the school is turning the corner.
- School is calm and orderly. Pupils work and play well together. Pupils are kind, considerate and respectful of each other and their teachers. Older pupils carry out their roles, such as house captains, diligently and with pride.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. They enjoy coming to school and rarely miss a day.
- The school is a hive of activity both before and after school. Pupils enjoy the wealth of sporting, musical and creative activities.
- Middle leaders have stepped up to the mark. Although it is early days, they are taking action to improve teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders have embraced online communication tools to make sure that parents are kept up to date with what is going on in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils across the school make stronger progress from their different starting points across the curriculum by:
 - teachers deepening pupils’ mathematical learning, so that pupils can make links between different mathematical ideas and use their increasing knowledge to solve problems
 - helping pupils to improve their competence and stamina in writing composition
 - giving pupils sufficient opportunities to practise reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum
 - teachers making good use of information about pupils’ learning to plan lessons which help pupils make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding
 - teachers making timely and accurate assessments of pupils progress in English and mathematics
 - raising teachers’ expectations of what pupils across the school can achieve, including the most able
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have the essential subject knowledge to teach reading, writing, phonics and mathematics effectively
 - ensuring that the pupil premium helps those eligible pupils to overcome their barriers to learning and accelerate their progress
 - improving the quality of provision in the outdoor area in early years.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, so that pupils across the school make more rapid progress, by:
 - continuing to take urgent and decisive action to eliminate areas of underperformance in the school
 - further developing the role of middle leaders so that they have greater influence on improving teaching and the responsibility for improvement is shared more evenly across the school
 - revisiting curriculum planning so that it sets out clearly the skills and knowledge that pupils need to succeed in all subjects, as they move from class to class
 - having an accurate, up-to-date view on the performance of cohorts and groups across the school
 - holding leaders and teachers to account for pupils’ performance
 - making sure that additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils is making a positive difference to outcomes for eligible pupils
 - ensuring that the school’s website complies with regulations and provides parents with useful, relevant information.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- For too long, the school has rested on its laurels. It has relied heavily on its past reputation and successes, failing to move with the times.
- Historically, governors and staff have not had access to key information and so have been unaware of the patterns and trends in the school's performance over time.
- Analysis of the progress of pupils has been limited mainly to outcomes at the end of each key stage, and insufficient attention has been paid to the progress of the different groups across the school. Lack of performance information for current pupils has hampered current leaders' efforts to establish an accurate, in-depth view of the school's performance.
- Pupils study the full range of subjects. However, the curriculum is disjointed. Plans do not set out clearly the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need as they move up through the school. This lack of direction has led to teachers being isolated and left to their own devices. Leaders have rolled out a new scheme of work for mathematics. However, implementation of this is hampered by a lack of the necessary training and support for teachers and support staff.
- Subject leadership is weak. Prior to this term, subject leaders have been oblivious to what has been going on in their subjects. With the support of the local authority, mathematics and English subject leaders are starting to take on responsibility for their subjects. They are relishing the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school's improvement plans. However, it is too early to evaluate whether they are making a positive difference to the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's own assessment systems have been ineffective. Staff reported that these assessments did not provide meaningful, reliable information. No one acted on the findings from these assessments. For example, teachers were not held to account for the performance of their pupils. A few parents reported to inspectors that they were frustrated by the lack of detailed information about their children's progress.
- The management of teachers' performance has not been rigorous enough. Teachers have not been given the training and support needed to make sure that they have the skills and expertise to do their jobs well. Although teachers and support staff have attended courses, this training has not made the positive difference that it should back in their classrooms. The new headteacher has strengthened performance management systems. Teachers have agreed clear, measurable targets, which are now informed by the school's improvement plans.
- Despite leaders writing a plan for the way in which additional funding for disadvantaged pupils was to be spent last year, no one can be certain that eligible pupils benefited from these monies. Teachers know who the disadvantaged pupils are in their classes but have had no say in what their barriers to learning are and how these may be overcome. There is no plan for how this money is to be spent this year.
- The school's website does not meet requirements. Moreover, much of the information is out of date and hard to access, so is not useful to either current or prospective parents. The new headteacher has well-developed plans to launch a new website. In

the meantime, parents appreciate the wealth of information about school life that they receive through the school's use of online communications.

- There are strengths in leadership now. Since his arrival in September, the new headteacher has made sure that staff and governors are in no doubt about the school's weaknesses. Staff and governors point to his arrival as being a catalyst for change. He has set out clearly what the school needs to do to improve. The new headteacher has made sure he has enlisted the help of the local authority to support these plans.
- The new headteacher has gained the support of governors, staff and parents quickly. Survey results confirm that these stakeholders are impressed by the changes he has already put in place. Staff and governors are keen to make the school 'great' again.
- The new headteacher has ensured that all pupils have completed assessments in mathematics, reading and writing to benchmark their performance. Middle leaders are expected to analyse results and report their findings. Dates for discussions between leaders and teachers about their classes have been set. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes.
- The additional physical education and sport premium is used well. Pupils are encouraged to keep fit and healthy through the wealth of before- and after-school clubs, including gymnastics and table tennis. Pupils have had notable successes in local tournaments and competitions. Specialist cricket coaching helped the older girls to earn a place in the county finals last term.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities makes a positive difference to eligible pupils. The teacher responsible for special educational needs and/or disabilities makes sure that these pupils receive the additional support they need. However, leaders and governors do not keep a close eye on the performance of this group of pupils to make sure that they achieve as well as they should.
- The school is a hive of activity before and after school. Pupils enjoy the many and varied clubs and activities. Pupils are keen musicians, gardeners, cooks and readers. They enjoy taking part in events both in school and in the local area. Pupils have enjoyed 'outstanding' success in the 'Cumbria in Bloom' school gardening competition.
- Fundamental British values are promoted across the school. A meeting with the local member of parliament, a tour of the Palace of Westminster and their own referendum on membership of the European Union have helped pupils to experience democracy first hand. The recently appointed Year 6 values leaders make sure that tolerance and respect are promoted across the school. New pupils, regardless of faith or ethnicity, are welcomed warmly into the school community.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective in holding the school to account. Records of meetings expose a lack of challenge to leaders by governors in the past. Governors have relied on the scant information provided to them by senior leaders to evaluate the school's performance. Governors have not had an accurate view of the school's performance. By their own admission, governors were 'shocked' when the new headteacher shared information with them which testified to some weaknesses in the

school's performance.

- Governors have wasted no time in stepping up to the mark. Governors meet frequently with senior leaders, make regular visits to school and have identified suitable training to help them do their jobs well. Governors have worked with leaders to evaluate the school's effectiveness and write an action plan. Consequently, actions are under way, but it is too early to evaluate whether they are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders carry out checks routinely to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are up to date with their training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities. The school has appropriate systems for staff to report any concerns. Pupils are confident that any rare incidents of bullying will be dealt with effectively by staff. Parents, staff and pupils are adamant that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Too often, the tasks set do not provide sufficient challenge. Moreover, most pupils could complete more work in the time given. These low expectations are hampering pupils' progress.
- Lack of access to high-quality training and support, a poorly planned curriculum and weak assessment practice mean that teachers do not plan lessons which help pupils to make rapid progress. Too often, pupils spend valuable lesson time completing tasks which occupy them rather than move their learning on.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their thinking and reasoning skills. Pupils are allowed to spend too much time completing similar calculations, which they usually get correct. Teachers do not move pupils onto more challenging tasks quickly enough.
- Although most teachers now follow the school's new marking policy, in writing too much emphasis is given to transcription at the expense of composition. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Consequently, this aspect of pupils' writing is not improving as quickly as it could.
- Teachers and support staff are too quick to step in when pupils ask for help. They do not give pupils enough encouragement or strategies to try to work things out for themselves.
- Across the curriculum, there are not enough tasks set which develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. Consequently, pupils are not developing fluency, stamina and confidence as well as they could. Moreover, they are not learning how essential these skills are in everyday life.
- Lessons do not challenge the most able pupils. Teachers do not set high enough expectations for what these pupils can achieve and make sure that tasks are pitched appropriately.

- The teaching of phonics is variable. Lack of training and no consistent, systematic approach across school mean that pupils do not learn to sound out and recognise words as well as they could.
- Lack of reliable assessment information is hampering teachers' planning. Teachers do not have a deep understanding of what pupils who started in their classes a few weeks ago know, understand and can do. As a result, lessons are not meeting the needs of the different groups, including most-able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as they could.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are able to talk about their favourite authors and genres. However, too many books in the school and class libraries, as well as the school's reading scheme, are old fashioned, worn and of poor quality. This discourages pupils from choosing them. The new headteacher has taken urgent action to arrange for the county library service to have a 'clear out', and new books are on their way.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They are keen to share their knowledge about famous people and events. Judicious use of technology in some lessons brings learning to life for pupils, for example the use of video to help pupils understand better the feelings of soldiers caught up in World War II. When questioning is used well, it helps pupils make strong progress and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils and most of their parents agree that the amount and type of homework they are set is appropriate. The graduated approach across school helps to make sure that the oldest pupils are well prepared for this aspect of high school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school makes sure that the oldest pupils are well prepared for their transition to high school. Pupils take part in a number of visits to their next school to help them get to know their new teachers and find their way around.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They said that bullying is not an issue and they are confident that any rare occurrences would be dealt with effectively by adults. Pupils are adamant that everyone is treated with respect regardless of ethnicity, faith or disability. This is supported by the school's own records. The school welcomes a range of external visitors to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Class teachers make sure that pupils are taught about online safety through the computing curriculum.
- The new headteacher has raised the profile of the member of staff who offers social and emotional support to pupils. Pupils are able to ask for help when they are facing personal challenges, such as bereavement, or they drop in for a chat when they are feeling upset.
- The school makes sure that pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy. The trim trail and climbing frames help pupils to keep active at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Senior leaders have reviewed the arrangements for school lunches. A new catering provider has been appointed to encourage more pupils to have a healthy school lunch.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are willing to share their ideas and ask

questions of their teachers and peers. They are keen to celebrate their own and others' successes.

- Pupils are keen to help others less fortunate than themselves. Recently, they held a coffee morning to raise funds for Macmillan. This week, pupils are making a charitable donation by being allowed to wear non-uniform clothes. This money is going towards the purchase of a defibrillator, which is to be installed at the community centre opposite the school.
- Lack of academic challenge to pupils in lessons means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn key skills such as perseverance and resilience to help them to be more successful learners.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are pleasant and polite to each other, staff and visitors. They are kind and considerate. Pupils look smart in their uniforms. They take good care of their classrooms and resources. Older pupils are excellent role models to younger pupils. They take their roles and responsibilities as house captains, playground leaders and values leaders seriously.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils play well together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They move sensibly around the building. Lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils are quick to follow instructions, listen carefully and are eager to please their teachers.
- The new headteacher has shifted the emphasis of the school's behaviour policy to rewarding positive behaviours. Pupils are proud to be nominated for the weekly 'You've been framed' awards and to earn 'dojos' and house points.
- Pupils look forward to coming to school. Almost all pupils are in school, on time every day. Leaders make sure that any rare absence is followed up.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The weaknesses in some aspects of the school's performance in recent years are a cause for concern. Leaders have failed to take appropriate actions to understand and reverse any dips in performance.
- Currently, leaders have no reliable information about how well current pupils are achieving across the different subjects. Work in pupils' books and discussions about their learning suggest that pupils are acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age. However, leaders cannot be sure whether pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- In 2017, more pupils reached the higher standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 and in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. However, pupils' weaker progress scores highlight that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, could achieve higher standards at the end of each key stage.
- Evidence gathered on inspection does not disprove the patterns and trends highlighted

in historical performance data for the end of each key stage. Although most pupils attain the standards expected for their age, pupils' progress across the key stages is not rapid enough.

- The most able pupils do not make strong progress from their starting points. There is a lack of challenge for these pupils as evidenced through their historic performance data and the work observed in pupils' books. This group of pupils are not achieving the high standards of which they are capable.
- Individual case studies for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities suggest that most of these pupils achieve well from their different starting points. However, although historical performance information also suggests that most of these pupils achieve well, the small number of pupils makes it difficult to conclude any patterns or trends.
- Despite some historical variations in the performance of girls and boys, recent end of key stage results and checks on current cohorts would suggest that there are no entrenched issues. For example, boys have caught up with girls in phonics.
- Generally, most pupils achieve the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1. Last year, the proportion of pupils reaching the standard dipped, but this may be explained by weaknesses in literacy for this cohort in early years. Evidence suggests that current pupils are working at age-related expectations.
- From the beginning to end of each key stage, pupils make expected progress. However, low expectations mean that too few make rapid progress. This means that not enough pupils are attaining the higher standards. Moreover, some pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for the academic demands of high school.
- All groups of pupils achieve well in science at the end of each key stage.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Most children are more than ready to start the Reception class. They are keen and eager to learn. However, in the past the school has not made sure that these children make rapid progress so that they are well prepared for Year 1. Moreover, not enough of the most able pupils have left Reception achieving the higher levels.
- The outdoor area is small and lacks suitable resources to provide a stimulating learning environment. There are limited opportunities for children to engage in high-quality, meaningful outdoor learning experiences. This is hampering children's progress across all aspects of the early years curriculum.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Quite rightly, she has identified the need to accelerate children's progress from their different starting points. Moreover, she has recognised the need to develop the outdoor learning area so that it affords similar opportunities to the indoor classroom. With the support of the headteacher, she has started to access training and support to further develop her skills and expertise. However, it is too early for these actions to have made any significant impact.
- Comprehensive transition arrangements help children to settle into school quickly. Well-established routines make sure that children know what is expected of them. Staff respond quickly to any occasional parental concerns. Consequently, children enjoy

coming to school and are happy.

- Staff take time to visit the various settings that children attend prior to starting school. They also visit children and families at home. During the months before they start at school, children and their parents are invited to 'stay and play' sessions. These sessions help children to get to know staff and each other and provide reassurance to parents. This approach helps children to get off to a good start in September.
- Staff make sure that parents are kept up to date with how their children are getting on through the school's online learning journal. Staff review children's progress regularly, using this information to help them plan next steps in learning. Staff review their plans appropriately, as they get to know children's interests. However, because their expectations of what children can achieve are not always high enough, they do not adapt their plans to ensure a good level of challenge for all children.
- Staff are vigilant. They make sure that they are up to date with their training and follow the school's agreed procedures for keeping children safe. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. Staff make sure that children have sufficient opportunities to take measured risks, such as when they use large outdoor play equipment. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for and safe.
- The early years class is a busy, purposeful and happy place. Children work and play well together. They are keen to please the adults and are delighted when the teacher praises their good behaviour. Children are able to work independently and persevere with tasks. They work and play well alongside each other are able to share and take turns. Children are confident in explaining what they are doing and why.

School details

Unique reference number	112213
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10024259

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Renney
Headteacher	Mr Peter Mills
Telephone number	01229 830201
Website	www.daneghyll.cumbria.sch.uk/
Email address	office@daneghyll.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20– 21 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about admissions, pupil premium funding, physical education and sports funding, governance and equalities on its website.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by the pupil premium, is below the national average.

- In 2016, the school met 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.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, including a joint observation and learning walk with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, other members of staff, the chair, vice chair and a member of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, assessment information and checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime and lunch. They also met formally with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors checked a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and considered the 38 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of staff and considered the 22 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Hardman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Quinn	Her Majesty's Inspector

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