

Norman Street Primary School

Norman Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 2BQ

Inspection dates

20–21 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved significantly in the last two years under the successful leadership of the headteacher.
- Governors, leaders and staff at all levels work together constructively. They are enthusiastic and have high ambitions for pupils.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. They benefit from good teaching and interesting activities. They play and work together happily and enthusiastically.
- Consistently good teaching, based on accurate assessment, supports pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in national assessments has risen considerably as a result.
- The teaching of investigative, reasoning and problem-solving skills is a particular strength.
- Staff are keen to try out new ideas to improve pupils' learning. A number of initiatives are in the early stages of their development and the impact of them on pupils' outcomes is not yet clear.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are thorough systems and clear lines of communication to keep pupils safe. The most vulnerable pupils are closely monitored.
- Relaxed and encouraging relationships support pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils say that they feel safe. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- The curriculum is broad and teachers make lessons interesting for pupils. However, the curriculum is not as strong in history, geography, art and design and technology as it is in other subjects. Pupils' knowledge and skills are not developed in enough depth in these subjects.
- Governors are well informed and provide effective support and challenge to leaders.
- Leaders across the school have a thorough understanding of the school's key strengths and priorities for improvement. Plans to take the school forward are effective. There is strong capacity to sustain further improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the curriculum and improve teaching and learning in history, geography, art and design and technology, by:
 - developing the accuracy and depth of pupils' knowledge and making sure that pupils' skills in these subjects are developed progressively from year to year
 - further developing the skills of leaders of these subjects to monitor, evaluate and plan for improvement.
- Ensure that leaders carefully evaluate the impact that new initiatives have on pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The positive impact of the headteacher's leadership is evident from a range of sources. Staff are unanimously positive about the improvements she has made in the two years since her appointment.
- The headteacher is supported ably by leaders and staff at all levels. They work together effectively and have high ambitions for pupils. Staff are highly motivated and pupils are proud of their school and their achievements.
- After a period of significant decline since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes have risen considerably. Pupils' progress is now good across the school. The new behaviour policy has had a positive impact and the school is calm and welcoming. Staff and pupils say behaviour is much improved.
- Senior leaders' improvement planning is incisive and effective. Priorities are based on thorough evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress. Actions are focused on the most important priorities for improvement.
- The systems to assess pupils' progress are detailed and identify individual pupils or groups of pupils who are not making the progress that is expected. These pupils are supported effectively to help them catch up and fill any gaps in their learning.
- The management of the performance of staff is a key strength. All staff are extremely positive about the support and challenge they receive to develop their practice. Training and development are planned carefully so that they support school improvement and develop the skills of staff. A number of staff are currently attending external courses in middle leadership to further enhance their skills.
- Leadership of core subjects (English, mathematics, science and computing) is well established. Leaders check teaching and learning and plan for improvement effectively. These core subjects have been the main focus for improvement over the last two years. The impact of the changes that have been made can be seen in pupils' improved progress in these subjects and outcomes in national, standardised assessments.
- Leadership of other subjects is not as established. Leaders of these subjects have great enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. They have reviewed the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching in their areas. As a result, they have been able to identify what improvements need to be made. They recognise that further work is needed to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in history, geography, art and design and technology.
- The curriculum is broad and all subjects are covered in all year groups. However, subjects are not all taught to the same standard across the school. The core subjects are taught in depth. Pupils also build on their knowledge and skills successfully in music and physical education. However, pupils' subject specific knowledge and skills are not developed systematically or in the same depth in geography, history, art and design and technology.
- Leaders are introducing changes in their drive for improvement. Staff are enthusiastic and keen to try out new ideas to stimulate learning and improve pupils' progress. They

have embarked on a number of initiatives recently, such as new programmes to support the teaching of reading and the use of electronic tablets to record and support learning. These initiatives are at an early stage of their development and have not been implemented effectively across the school. In addition, leaders have not yet had time to check and evaluate the impact of them on pupils' outcomes.

- The school's extra-curricular provision is good. The breakfast and after-school clubs are a popular addition to school. Many parents and carers commented on the good quality of before- and after-school care. Pupils benefit from a range of additional activities that enhance their learning, including sports, choir and drama. Pupils enjoy the clubs and feel safe in them. Learning is also enhanced by a range of visits and trips.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils discuss moral issues in a range of subjects. They develop a reasonable understanding of different faiths and cultures in lessons, assemblies and various themed events. Pupils are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and gain a good understanding of diversity in modern Britain. Pupils are aware of fundamental British values and show tolerance and respect for people from different backgrounds. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The strong links with local churches and the cathedral enhance pupils' spiritual development. The choir has an excellent reputation and frequently sings at various locations within the local community. Pupils' singing is joyous and inspiring.
- The vast majority of parents are positive about the changes made in school, stating, for example, 'The school has really progressed in many positive ways under the guidance of the headteacher.' They say: 'The headteacher is communicative, caring and has the interests of the school and all who attend it as her number one priority'.
- A small minority of parents say that it can be difficult to get to talk with school leaders and feel that their concerns are not dealt with as well as they could be.
- Leaders are outward-looking and actively seek external challenge and support to improve the school further. Recent reviews of the use of the pupil premium, pupils' outcomes and teaching and learning have supported leaders to make further improvements. Leaders work collaboratively with other schools locally and further afield to share ideas and develop the effectiveness of teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are well informed by detailed reports from external appraisers as well from the headteacher and leaders at all levels. They share the high ambitions that staff have for pupils.
- Governors support and challenge school leaders effectively. They have a range of skills and ensure that they are up to date with training. They engage with the local authority and external advisers effectively in order to benefit from external expertise.
- Additional funding, including pupil premium, sport premium and funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is used effectively. There are detailed action plans to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Governors monitor progress against the plans closely. Pupils within

these groups are making good progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that there are effective systems and clear lines of communication to keep pupils safe. The most vulnerable pupils are closely monitored. Record-keeping is thorough and leaders take prompt action where necessary.
- Leaders work in close partnership with a range of external agencies. They ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND are met.
- The procedures for safe recruitment of staff meet requirements. Safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and followed through by staff. All staff have completed training relevant to their roles and have completed evaluations of how revisions to government guidance will affect their practice.
- There is a comprehensive safeguarding and anti-bullying programme in place. This includes regular training for staff and opportunities for pupils to work with safeguarding experts.
- Policies and procedures to investigate and act on complaints and parental concerns about safeguarding are thorough. Records are detailed and show that parents and external partners are engaged appropriately to deal with concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Consistently good teaching is improving pupils' progress and raising their attainment in all year groups. Pupils' achievement in national, standardised assessments and tests is improving as a result. Parents who made their views known are extremely positive about teaching. 'The teachers listen carefully and deliver a broad and rich curriculum that is suited to the children,' is typical of their comments.
- Teaching is particularly effective in the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teachers assess pupils' prior learning thoroughly in these subjects and build on it systematically.
- Teachers explain new learning clearly and use questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at providing timely support and further challenge when pupils work independently.
- The teaching of investigative, reasoning and problem-solving skills is a strength across the school. Pupils' curiosity is stimulated with challenging investigations and problems in science and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Teachers have high expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught successfully and developed effectively in a range of subjects. Pupils develop a good understanding of text and language features of different types of writing. For example, they talk knowledgeably about the effects of imagery or alliteration when reading and writing poetry.

- Teachers are successful in improving pupils' reading. Pupils' phonic skills are developed well in the early stages of learning to read. Their comprehension skills are promoted effectively using a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with SEND are supported sensitively in class and small groups. Teaching assistants are trained to a high standard and skilled at promoting pupils' active engagement in their learning. They extend pupils' speaking and thinking skills effectively.
- Pupils enjoy learning across the curriculum. They are particularly enthusiastic about music and physical education, where effective teaching supports them to develop their skills as they move through school.
- Pupils' computing skills are developed well. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills effectively to support learning in other subjects. For example, they carry out research and record their learning using a variety of programmes.
- Teaching is not as effective in history, geography, art and design and technology. In these subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are not developed systematically or in as much depth as other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The relaxed and encouraging relationships between staff and pupils support pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is promoted well in lessons and through the school's pastoral systems.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. The procedures to keep them safe are thorough and implemented consistently. Pupils say the school is calmer than it was in the past. They feel well looked after by all staff.
- Pupils report that they feel free from bullying in school. Records show that incidents of bullying have reduced significantly and are now rare. Pupils are sure that staff will deal with any incidents that should occur quickly and fairly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including bullying that is associated with prejudice and intolerance. Pupils show respect for people from different faiths and cultures and from family settings that are different from their own.
- Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in the world beyond school is developed effectively. Pupils are taught how to keep safe when using the internet and when out in the community.
- The vast majority of parents who made their views known feel that they are 'welcome to talk to staff about any worries and concerns'. A small minority of parents feel that their concerns are not acted upon as they would wish. Nearly all parents say that their children feel safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff and pupils say that the revised behaviour policy has improved behaviour considerably over the last two years. The school is calm and welcoming. Pupils are happy and proud of their school and their achievements.
- Pupils are sociable and well behaved in shared areas. Older pupils set a good example for younger pupils, for example as 'play leaders' at breaktimes.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They follow instructions well and mostly persevere with their work. Occasionally, pupils become fidgety or distracted from their learning in class. When this happens, teachers use effective strategies to redirect their attention to the task.
- Pupils' attendance is average. Leaders' efforts to reduce persistent absenteeism has had a positive impact.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has significantly reduced in the last two years.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly in the last two years. Pupils currently in school make at least good progress in each year group in these subjects.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment in phonics assessments in Year 1 and in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 were all above the national averages. Pupils' attainment in the Year 6 national, standardised assessments was broadly average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. These results represent the continuation of a positive trend and are much better than previous outcomes.
- Good teaching supports pupils who are currently in school to develop fluency in their basic skills in mathematics, reading and writing. Pupils make good progress in reading. Their skills are developed effectively across the curriculum and through the wide range of reading that they are encouraged to undertake for pleasure. Pupils' writing is much improved. Work in pupils' books is well presented, varied and interesting.
- A stronger focus on teaching basic skills has provided a firm foundation in mathematics. Pupils now make good progress. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge skilfully to a range of mental calculations and challenging problems.
- Leaders monitor the progress of the most able pupils carefully. The most able pupils are provided with suitably challenging work to deepen their thinking and learning. Consequently, the proportions of pupils exceeding the school's basic expectations for attainment increases as pupils move through school.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. Additional support is planned carefully to meet specific needs. For example, therapy sessions develop pupils' communication skills and their ability to work as part of a team. These pupils are also helped to deepen their reading and mathematical skills through the provision of extra help that is well matched to their needs.

- The pupil premium is used effectively. The differences between the progress of disadvantaged and other pupils nationally are diminishing. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress alongside their peers.
- Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not developed as well in history, geography, art and design and technology as they are in other subjects. Consequently, pupils of all abilities and throughout the school make less progress in these subjects than others.
- Pupils are prepared well for their move to secondary school. Their academic and personal skills enable them to approach new learning confidently.

Early years provision

Good

- The Reception classes are bright and welcoming. The encouraging approach of teachers and support staff helps children to settle happily and ensures that they feel safe. Children play together happily and confidently. All welfare requirements are met.
- Children enter the school with a wide range of pre-school experiences. A sizeable proportion have knowledge and skills that are below those that are typical for their age. Good teaching supports children to make good progress from their various starting points. Typically, an above-average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. Funding to support disadvantaged children is used effectively to ensure that they make the same good progress as others.
- Good leadership and strong teamwork keep the early years provision vibrant and interesting. Teaching staff assess children's learning needs in detail and plan together carefully. They devise activities that appeal to children's interests and develop their skills successfully. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to children's learning.
- Teaching is particularly effective in developing children's mathematical knowledge and their communication, language and literacy skills. Staff extend and develop children's vocabulary and promote their reasoning, speaking and listening skills in all activities. Children enjoy reading and writing for a range of purposes.
- Phonics teaching is well organised to make sure children build on their knowledge and skills systematically. Teaching in small groups is precise and matched closely to children's stages of development.
- The activities provided for children to access independently are interesting and engaging. Children enjoy playing with the dinosaur models, for example, and enthusiastically build dens in the outdoor area. The development of the outdoor areas is a priority of leaders and actions are already showing improvements.
- Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developed effectively. Children are well behaved and develop good attitudes to learning. They sit and listen when required and use resources sensibly.
- Parents who made their views known were consistently positive about the early years provision. They said, for example, 'Staff are amazing. They helped my child settle in and come to love school.' Parents receive good advice to help them support children's learning at home.

- Children's well-developed personal skills and secure basic skills prepare them well for their move into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	112219
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10042476

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Keith Teasdale
Headteacher	Mrs Carolyn Murray
Telephone number	01228 210168
Website	www.normanst.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	office@normanst.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2014

Information about this school

- The current headteacher has joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school is larger than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. An above-average proportion have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is active in the Carlisle South Primary Association.
- The school has breakfast and after-school clubs, which are managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They looked at pupils' work in lessons and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work across the curriculum in more detail.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. They met with groups of pupils and gained their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, staff, and the chair and four other representatives of the governing body. They spoke with a representative of the local authority and an external consultant by telephone.
- They looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning and records of monitoring and training. Safeguarding and complaints policies were examined.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents. They spoke with parents at the start of school and by request. They spoke to all teachers to gain their views.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Trish Merritt	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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