

Castle Carrock School

Castle Carrock, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 9LU

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- The school is a strong and happy community, where learning and good behaviour are valued and where all pupils, whatever their abilities or needs, are made to feel welcome.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, the very small numbers in receipt of additional funding and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.
- Teaching is good and contributes strongly to the good achievement. Teachers manage their classes well and usually make sure that pupils do work which is at a level which helps them learn well.
- Pupils behave very well. They work hard and are keen to do well in lessons. They take on many responsibilities and love coming to school, where they feel very safe.
- Governors support school leaders very well. Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly.
- Pupils enjoy not just lessons but the wide range of clubs and activities which the school offers, particularly the high number of sporting activities.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Successful whole-school teamwork has contributed well to the improvements in achievement over the past year.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and relationships are excellent.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always clear about exactly what they are expected to learn in lessons and, as a result, progress for all pupils is sometimes not as fast as it could be.
- There is variability in the way teachers mark pupils' work which does not help pupils' understanding and not all teachers ensure that pupils respond to their written comments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons taught by five teachers and listened to pupils reading. A whole-school assembly was also observed.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and some parents. The inspector also talked informally with pupils in the dining room and playground.
- Documents reviewed include the school's own information about pupils' progress; plans for school improvement; the monitoring of learning and teachers' performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information and the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, the school's website was scrutinised.
- The inspector also took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), results of the school's own consultations with parents, discussions with parents before school and 12 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils, including those of nursery age, are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is well below average. (The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for those children looked after by the local authority.)
- All of the pupils are from White British families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Castle Carrock Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 November 2011. When its predecessor school, Castle Carrock School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Many of the pupils travel to and from school by a dedicated bus service from a wide catchment area of rural villages and hamlets.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring all pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn from the activities they complete
 - developing a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work so that they know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve, have time to make improvements and use their increased understanding in subsequent lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school part-time in Nursery with levels of skill and knowledge in line with those typical for their age. As a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching in the Nursery and Reception class, children make good progress there, with an increasing proportion joining Year 1 with above average attainment.
- Inspectors saw the youngest children making this good progress in a variety of activities. Sometimes these took place in the classroom, sometimes outside. For example, the inspector observed some children finding and writing facts about crabs as part of their topic on 'The Sea', whilst others were practising their painting skills or taking part in role play in the outdoor area. The children made great strides in their personal development, working and playing together eagerly. At the same time they rapidly gained basic language, literacy and counting skills.
- From Year 1 onwards, pupils make good progress although with varying pupil numbers in each year group the progress made is not always consistent across the school. They leave at the age of 11 with above average attainment. It is particularly high in reading. Following disappointing outcomes in mathematics in 2013 the school has worked hard to address any underlying issues. These actions have been effective. The school's recent assessments indicate that standards have risen in mathematics across the school and predictions for the results of the published Year 2 and Year 6 assessments are higher than the 2013 results.
- Inspectors heard several pupils reading and talking about their reading habits. They are confident in their reading and enjoy the range of books available.
- Pupils throughout the school have well-developed speaking and listening skills. They speak clearly and confidently, both in lessons and in assemblies.
- Pupils achieve well overall because all groups share in the good progress. The very small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as other pupils in the school. This is also the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school provides a lot of extra support for pupils as and when they need it through, for example, a very flexible approach to the arrangement of teaching groups. Their progress has improved in the current school year.
- Progress is variable between classes and year groups, although overall standards are rising. The variation is partly due to pupils not always being clear enough as to what they are expected to learn from the activities they are involved in. When this occurs, there is too much concentration on completing the task given rather than on the key learning points to be gained.
- In the last national tests, the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attaining the highest levels was low compared with the national results. Leadership has worked successfully to raise the expectations of the staff and of the most able pupils throughout the school and larger numbers of pupils are now attaining at the higher levels. For example, able mathematicians in Year 6 have received well-focused teaching and as a result, these pupils, like other groups, are meeting challenging targets this year.
- Parents, when responding to the schools own survey and talking to inspectors, are complimentary about their children's progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Although there are aspects of outstanding teaching in the school, it is good overall. This has been so for some time and applies throughout the school, although inspectors saw evidence of particularly effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in upper Key Stage 2.
- There are very good relationships in all classes, with pupils generally eager to learn. They respond well when answering questions which test and reinforce their learning. Pupils learn well in all school situations. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed lessons and really like the staff.

- Attainment has improved in physical education, partly because teachers' skills in the subject have been boosted through the school buying in specialist teaching paid for by primary sports funding. Consequently, all pupils are benefiting and the school is rightly proud of their sporting achievements.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in this small school, taking a range of groups for lessons including phonics and mathematics. They help pupils supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to increase their skills in English and mathematics. The school provides extra support for some of these pupils in small groups, or as individuals, both inside and outside lessons.
- Teachers are positive about the good opportunities the school provides for their own further development. Some come from supporting each other and some from opportunities outside school, for example, when visiting other local schools to gain or share expertise.
- Teaching is not outstanding because there are still some variations in quality between classes, due partly to the different level of clarity provided by teachers as to what the pupils are expected to learn. This limits progress for pupils as their attention is often too focused on the activity they are doing rather than on what they would be expected to learn by completing the task.
- Pupils say that they have a general idea of how well they are doing and understand their targets. However, although teachers know the school's marking policy this is not applied consistently in marking work and giving feedback. Some of their comments are more helpful than others in showing pupils how well they have done and how to improve their work. Pupils in some classes are more likely to be made to act directly upon teachers' comments than in others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's motto of 'developing a love of learning' clearly supports the positive attitudes to learning seen throughout the school. Pupils enjoy lessons, take pride in their work and value their school. Many delight in challenging themselves to do better. Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground, during lunchtime and when moving around the school. They are courteous, care for each other and treat other people with friendship and respect. They look after the school's equipment and treat resources properly. Many older pupils revel in the opportunities available to look after and help younger ones at break time.
- Pupils' behaviour shows that the school is successful in promoting an ethos of equal value and equal opportunities. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated by the school and pupils understand this and behave accordingly.
- Staffs' management of behaviour is consistent and effective. School records show that there have been very few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying over recent years, and any that do occur are dealt with swiftly and sensitively.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught about healthy lifestyles, avoiding bullying and keeping safe in different situations. E-safety is promoted strongly and effectively and pupils are knowledgeable about this. Pupils who talked to the inspector said that they felt safe and understood how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance has been falling in recent years but any issues have been addressed and attendance this year is above the national average. Punctuality is good, reflecting the strong school ethos and pupils' love of coming to school.
- A very large majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that their children were happy and safe at school, and that the school managed behaviour well and dealt effectively with bullying. As one parent put it: 'This school is giving my children a fantastic experience and they're always happy'.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good, mainly as a result of the headteacher's strong vision for the school and his ability to nurture the strengths and interests of the staff team. Staff were unanimously positive in telling the inspector how they supported the school's drive for improvement.
- The leadership has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Its improvement plans focus on the right priorities.
- With a small staff team, all teachers share responsibility for regularly checking the quality of teaching and learning and are committed to improving both. Leadership potential is nurtured through the allocation of specific responsibilities to teachers, particularly for developing the curriculum and improving teaching and learning.
- One of several improvements recently has been the strong focus on improving the teaching and provision for improving achievement in mathematics across the school. The range of effective systems now in place ensures staff are able to respond quickly to pupils' needs; for example, in creating ability grouping in mathematics across Key Stage 2 where pupils can move groups according to their needs.
- The leadership ensures that all staff are held accountable, teachers' pay is clearly linked to their performance and pupils' progress. The leadership provides good opportunities, often in conjunction with local schools, for staff to develop their expertise.
- The leadership works hard to give pupils a rich experience at school, for example, through sport. There is a range of exciting activities provided, including tri-golf, bouldering and the Cumbrian run. The school has used its primary sport funding well to increase staff expertise in physical education and provide more opportunities for pupils to participate both in school and out of school time.
- The school creates many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, inspectors saw an effective assembly on the value placed on teamwork, linked to the forthcoming football world cup. Pupils eagerly take part in assemblies.
- Staff, parents and pupils are very complimentary about the school's leadership. Many strengths are referred to, including the importance of maintaining and promoting the special and distinct character of the school and its rural location.
- In order to maintain an accurate view of their performance as an academy the school's leadership has commissioned support from external consultants. Visits from these consultants have focused on evaluating the work of the school and improving teaching. The recommendations from consultants have been acted upon effectively.
- Leadership is not yet outstanding because some of the improvements to teaching and learning are not yet secure enough to have ironed out all inconsistencies, although this is clearly a school which has the capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors support and encourage the headteacher's high expectations and there is a well placed and strong sense of trust between governors and staff. They have received training about school data, safeguarding and other aspects of the school's provision. This training has helped them to make checks and challenge the school well so that necessary improvements are made. Governors have a good understanding of the school's key priorities, being actively involved in deciding a path for improvement. They review the quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' work, receiving regular reports from the headteacher. They check that performance management and the training and support given to teachers result in improved performance and rewards, and that any weaker performance is properly addressed. Governors monitor the use of the small amount of additional funding carefully and make sure that it effectively supports pupils' achievement.

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	137653
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	439623

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Elsender
Headteacher	Chris Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
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