

# Appleby Primary School

Station Road, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, CA16 6TX

**Inspection dates** 24–25 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have brought about very considerable improvements since the previous inspection. Areas for development given in that report and in the subsequent monitoring visit, have been taken on board fully. As a result, the quality of teaching and the achievement of the pupils have risen substantially.
- Members of staff are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school and appreciate the personalised advice and help they have been given to improve their practice.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Pupils get on very well with each other and their behaviour makes a good contribution to their learning.
- Pupils achieve well across the school and all groups make good progress. The previous decline in standards has been reversed and most pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and ensures that pupils make good progress. This includes the most able pupils, those who are disabled or have special educational needs and also those who are disadvantaged.
- Teachers know the abilities of their pupils well and set work for them accordingly. They check how well they are learning throughout the lessons and they mark their work thoroughly.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils are reflective and sensitive. They talk about the memorial garden with pride and say there is nothing they would change about their school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The rapid improvement in achievement over the past 16 months has not been consolidated for a long enough period of time. Not enough teaching results in outstanding progress.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation are not always given enough focus in all lessons.
- Teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to respond to their comments on how to improve their work.
- Not enough pupils have a real thirst for knowledge and understanding and love of learning. Work does not always excite them or is geared well enough to their interests.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to solve problems or apply their learning to real-life situations.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 11 teachers, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made additional short visits to lessons and listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- The inspectors examined information about current pupils' learning and progress as well as learning and progress in 2013 to 2014. The inspectors also looked at work in pupils' book from this year and from the previous academic year.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teachers in charge of subjects, the Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection and the school development plans.
- The inspectors scrutinised records on attendance and behaviour, as well as information about the quality of teaching and the performance of staff.
- The inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 18 responses from members of staff.

## Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Appleby is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportions of pupils who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school has a Strategic Resource Unit, which supports pupils with additional needs. The unit currently supports seven pupils.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Build on the rapid improvement in achievement by:
  - ensuring that more teaching results in outstanding progress for all groups
  - always making sure that there is a close focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation
  - providing ample opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments on how to improve their work.
- Help more pupils develop a thirst for knowledge and understanding and love of learning by:
  - further developing the curriculum in line with their interests
  - providing more opportunities, such as problem solving, for pupils to apply their learning to real-life situations.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The vision and determination of the headteacher to address the areas for development from the previous inspection and monitoring visit has brought about significant improvements in teaching, achievement and in leadership and management. The school fully admits that it has had a wake-up call and it has responded to it very well.
- The headteacher has been fully supported by her senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and members of staff. They have an accurate understanding of the work of the school. They have clearly identified the priorities for improvement and taken decisive action to address these. This has been helped by the work of the local authority which has provided good support and advice.
- The staff questionnaires showed just how supportive staff are of the school and how they appreciate the help and support to improve their practice. Teachers' pay is linked very closely to their performance, with all being held to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Leadership and management of teaching and learning have been impressive. All teachers have improved the quality of their teaching through help that has been personalised to their specific needs. Teachers have worked well together to learn from each other and to share their best practice. The result has been a dramatic rise in the progress and attainment of all groups of pupils, not only during 2013 to 2014 but also continuing this academic year.
- The skills of leaders with particular responsibilities have been developed to strengthen their contributions. Work scrutinies were carried out last year and lessons learned from their findings. For example, there are now more focused comments on pupils' work and this is helping to accelerate progress even further. Increasingly, pupils are being encouraged to respond to those comments, although this practice is not as widespread as it could be.
- The school now has much more effective systems in place for checking pupils' progress and interventions to address underachievement are much more timely. Targets are demanding and the progress of the most able pupils, a group previously underachieving, has been given a high priority. Teachers have 'surgeries' during lessons to make sure that the most able pupils are challenged as much as possible.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive. Pupils from the strategic unit are integrated into mainstream lessons as much as possible. Many pupils show a real eagerness to learn, but some of the work does not engage others quite as well as it is not linked closely enough to their interests.
- The many additional sporting and cultural activities available contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Reflection is a key part of many lessons and there is sensitivity to the needs and welfare of others.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for all pupils by analysing thoroughly the progress of different groups of pupils and providing support for those who need it. Pupils are very clear that everyone is treated equally.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The school places a high emphasis on keeping its pupils safe and risk assessments for activities out of school are extremely thorough.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very committed to the school and play an active role. They have benefitted greatly from an external review and are now more skilled in understanding data about pupils' performance, allowing them to hold the school to account well for the progress pupils make. They also keep a close check on the quality of teaching, linking it effectively to teachers' pay. Governors are fully involved in checking the effectiveness of the use of additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils and for the school's provision for sport.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe. They have a keen awareness of the different forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. They say none of that happens and that the school sorts out the occasional disagreements that occur very quickly.
- Pupils look after each other very well, including those students in Emma's building, the strategic resource unit. They promote safety well and have designed their own safety poster for working with computers. Children in the Nursery and in Reception classes were seen working very safely with scissors and saws.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. For some it is outstanding. School records indicate that behaviour has

been good for some time. This view is echoed by staff, parents and by the pupils themselves, although the pupils say there is also room for the behaviour of a few pupils to be better.

- Pupils are very welcoming and courteous. They take a pride in their school, which is virtually litter-free, and in the presentation of their work. Their very positive attitudes have a good impact on their learning. Many pupils are enthusiastic and keen to do well, developing a real love of learning. A few pupils are more difficult to engage, especially when they find the work less interesting.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, such as the school council, directing the queue for the canteen at lunchtime or mentoring younger children or pupils in Emma's building. These roles are coveted and carried out maturely and sensitively.
- Attendance is generally above average for all groups of pupils. Pupils enjoy being at school and say that there is little about it that they would want to change.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is good and results in pupils making good progress. Some teaching results in pupils making outstanding gains in their learning, but there is not enough of this at present.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They set work that is matched well to the abilities of their pupils and this enables the different groups of pupils to develop their skills and to learn well.
- Teaching assistants work seamlessly with the teachers, sometimes with pupils with additional needs and sometimes with the most able pupils. Their questioning works well for those pupils who find their work difficult and stretches the most able to extend their learning.
- Teachers capitalise on pupils' eagerness to learn and willingness to cooperate with others. The inspectors observed many mature discussions of work, with pupils maturely debating different points of view. This promotes pupils' communication skills well.
- Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are incorporated well into many lessons. Hand-held computers are used particularly well for research purposes. However, there is not enough focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation. The school recognises this as something that was a relative weakness last year, despite the many improvements.
- Reflection is a feature of many lessons, such as what it would have been like to live during the Second World War or in a Romany caravan in the previous century. Such lessons promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Work is marked often and thoroughly. It is clear what the pupils are expected to learn and there are many specific comments written in pupils' books to help them improve their work. Whilst there are many instances of pupils responding to those comments, this is not widespread practice at present.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved hugely since the previous inspection. The decline in achievement has been turned round sharply over the past 16 months. Instead of pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 with attainment that was sometimes below average, they now leave with attainment that is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from their individual starting points.
- Progress is good throughout the school, with large rises in attainment reported by the school at the end of Year 2 in 2014 compared to 2013. The local authority has moderated the school's data and inspection evidence from observing learning, talking to pupils and scrutiny of work in their books confirms that progress is good and attainment above average. Pupils use their good knowledge of linking letters to sounds to become proficient readers and they show great enthusiasm for reading.
- The progress of the most able pupils had been a concern. However, their progress is now securely good and in some cases outstanding. The school has many strategies in place to ensure this, such as 'surgeries' to provide additional challenge during lessons to boost the learning of the most able pupils.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make is good. This, too, has improved greatly in mathematics, reading and writing since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence confirms that improvement in progress is continuing this year.
- Both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils improved the standards attained in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2014 compared to 2013. The school's data shows that in 2014 disadvantaged pupils' attainment rose dramatically to be above that of pupils nationally in mathematics and reading and broadly in line in writing. Gaps in the standards that disadvantaged pupils achieve

compared to their peers in school are closing. In 2013, at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils were about half a term behind in mathematics, one term behind in reading and four terms behind in writing. The school's analysis of the 2014 results show that they are broadly in line with their peers in mathematics and reading and about one term behind in writing.

- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because the work they receive stretches them appropriately and they are very well supported, both in class and in the strategic resource unit.
- The pupils in the strategic resource unit have complex needs and the adults know and understand the needs of individuals very well. This allows the staff to target appropriate support. As a result, these pupils make good progress both in their learning and also in their personal development.
- The school has recognised that attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar needs further attention to boost achievement overall. Attainment in those areas was broadly average rather than above average in the 2014 end of Year 6 external tests. This is because there has not always been a close enough focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation in all lessons.
- The school uses the primary sports funding well, for example, by paying for specialist coaching and also for travel to matches. The school wins many competitions and are district cricket champions. There is a high level of participation in sport. It is much enjoyed and contributes well to pupils' good physical well-being.

### The early years provision is good

- Children get off to a very good start in the early years. They enter Nursery with skills that are generally typical for their age. The bright and stimulating environment helps to ensure that they settle quickly and enjoy their learning. The well-thought-out programme of activities helps all children to develop their interests and independence quickly. The majority not only reach the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1, but many exceed them.
- Staff work very closely with parents and encourage them to contribute to the children's learning journals. This is being very successful in moving on the learning of all children, including those who are eligible for additional funding.
- Teaching in the early years is consistently good. Work is matched well to the abilities of individual children and the outdoors area is used well to complement learning. Adults questioning to extend learning is of a high quality.
- Children enjoy their daily sessions in small groups which help them link sounds and letters and, as a result, some are able to give their own examples of words ending with -ck. The high priority given to literacy, results in many children having a good range of vocabulary. Some children told an inspector that they could not get to Carlisle because their train had 'derailed'. Occasionally, however, there are missed opportunities to extend learning in literacy in some of the activities that the children choose for themselves.
- Safety and welfare are given a very high priority. Inspectors were impressed with the children's good behaviour and their high awareness of safety, for example using scissors in Nursery and saws in the Reception class. Numeracy is incorporated well into activities, such as measuring the width of the three bears' bottoms so that sufficiently large chairs could be constructed for them from balsa wood.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Children's physical and emotional well-being are prioritised and care is taken to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, through time for reflection and respect for others. Assessment of children's learning is thorough, next steps in learning made clear and interventions put in place to address any underachievement.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112408
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	452023

This inspection of the school 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>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Baxter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Pearson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	017683 51431
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