

Sedbergh Primary School

Long Lane, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5AL

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, have successfully steered the school through a challenging period. They have been successful in their drive to raise standards since the previous inspection.
- The acting headteacher, the executive headteacher and, more recently, the newly appointed headteacher have worked tirelessly and effectively to secure improvements in teaching and learning and raise expectations throughout the school.
- Leaders have tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection with vigour and they know the school well, as is shown in their accurate self-evaluation.
- Teaching is purposeful and effective. Lessons are lively and relationships are good.
- Most pupils make good progress and their achievement has steadily improved in all subjects.
- The school supports disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities very well. Their progress has improved.
- Pupils behave very well; they are courteous, and they work and play harmoniously together. They show a high level of care and consideration for each other.
- Pupils say that school is a safe and friendly place to be. Procedures to keep pupils safe are robust.
- Attendance is consistently well above average. No pupils are persistently absent and no pupils have been excluded from school.
- The Nursery and Reception classes form a strong early years department. This well-managed provision ensures that children get off to a good start. They make good progress in readiness for key stage 1.
- The teaching of phonics is a particular strength and most pupils go on to become confident readers.
- The governing body has undergone significant change since the time of the previous inspection. Much of the school's improvement has come about because the governing body has tackled previous weaknesses in leadership and teaching.
- Some of the school's improvements are more recent and have not yet been applied fully and consistently in all areas of the school. Assessment is much improved but leaders are not yet making the best use that they could of the information it provides.
- Teachers now have better information about pupils' progress but sometimes they do not use this well enough to plan activities that match the abilities of the most and least able pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the progress made by the most able and least able pupils in some year groups by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what these pupils can achieve
 - the work set for them is at the right level of challenge
 - leaders regularly assess and evaluate their progress.
- Improve the strategies used for assessment so that:
 - teachers, subject coordinators and senior leaders know how well pupils are doing
 - any underperformance is identified in a timely way
 - assessment information is used to identify and plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff have worked hard to respond positively to the findings of the previous inspection. They have tackled the weaknesses identified in 2014 successfully and show a clear and ambitious vision to make the school the best it can be. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly settled into the life of the school and begun to build upon the effective work of the previous executive headteacher and the school's senior leadership team. Leaders have developed an inclusive, welcoming school where the achievement of pupils comes first and teaching and learning are enjoyable and purposeful. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen throughout the school.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. They know the school well and can demonstrate the impact of their work across key areas of the school. Leaders also understand what needs to improve further. They have put clear procedures in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that all pupils make.
- Following the previous inspection, there has been a whole-school focus on improving pupils' writing. Subject leaders have worked hard to raise the profile of writing across subjects and throughout the school. Their success can be seen in the improved quality of learning taking place in lessons and in the writing and guidance displays situated in classrooms and around the school, to which pupils refer.
- The deputy headteacher, when in her temporary acting headteacher role, formed a new senior leadership team that included key middle leaders within school. This proved effective and strengthened the school's capacity to move forward in the absence of the substantive headteacher. Middle leaders have grown in confidence as a result and have had a positive impact on improving teaching and raising expectations in their areas. All staff are highly motivated to do well. They recognised the need for change and have welcomed the school's increased focus on their professional development.
- The leadership and organisation of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been strengthened. Pupils requiring additional support are identified early and support for them is organised well.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in school is very small. Senior leaders check very carefully any differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Effective one-to-one support aimed at boosting disadvantaged pupils' skills in English and mathematics is provided by teaching assistants. This is further enhanced through additional provision, such as the school's writing and mathematics clubs held at lunchtime. These initiatives have brought about faster progress for disadvantaged pupils. The impact of pupil premium funding is carefully assessed by senior leaders, and discussed and evaluated by the governing body.
- Work to develop the new primary national curriculum further is well underway. Leaders are evaluating and reshaping the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of the pupils. In doing so, they are looking for gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills that can be filled. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and its breadth is reflected in the many inspiring displays around the school.
- Lunchtime clubs and after-school activities enhance and enrich the curriculum, and are

enjoyed by pupils. The primary physical education and sport funding is used well to increase pupils' participation in sport, provide staff training and secure the services of a specialist sports coach.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. Leaders work with a range of partners to broaden pupils' experiences of the world. Visiting clergy conduct assemblies and class reflection times are used effectively to promote pupils' spirituality, moral understanding and social awareness. Additional activities include educational visits to places of interest, visiting groups, and after-school and lunchtime clubs.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of fundamental British values. They learn about tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils also enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being members of the school council. Older pupils who spoke with an inspector showed that they knew about diversity in modern Britain but their first-hand experience is understandably more limited. The school is aware of this and there are plans to make visits to other localities and places of interest to broaden pupils' awareness.
- Parents who responded to the questionnaire were extremely positive about the school, particularly in how it has changed and developed since the last inspection. They describe the school as one that is extremely caring and effective in encouraging their children to do their best and thrive. One parent wrote, 'I am really pleased with the progress the school has made since the last Ofsted. Our children are really happy in school and are progressing well.' Another parent commented, 'There is a very positive and welcoming feel to the school. The teachers are excellent and very approachable.'
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school. Following the departure of the previous headteacher, the local authority brokered the support of an executive headteacher from a successful local school to work with senior leaders for two days a week over two terms. Local authority staff also worked with subject leaders, reviewed the quality of teaching and learning across the school and conducted a scrutiny of the work in pupils' books. Feedback from the local authority has helped leaders to focus on key improvement strategies and help shape the professional development of teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been on a journey of improvement since the time of the last inspection and through that process have strengthened their role and impact significantly.
- Governors responded constructively to the review of governance that took place following the last inspection, and the governing body was reconstituted in July 2015.
- The new chair and vice-chair of the governing body have demonstrated that they are very committed to change and improvement but, at the same time, they have been careful to base their decision-making on a firm and robust understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they are able to support and challenge school leaders effectively.
- The governing body took decisive action to deal with weak leadership and teaching and has worked effectively to continue this improvement with the new headteacher.
- Governors are well organised and collectively provide a wide range of relevant skills and experience which helps to drive improvement. They have received effective

training and support from the local authority, which has been valuable and timely.

- The chair and vice-chair of the governing body share the passion and determination of school leaders to continue to strengthen the school's performance at all levels.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are well documented and procedures are robust. Staff receive regular training and are well versed in how to keep children safe. Rigorous checks are completed on all new staff and regular visitors to the school, and leaders ensure that records are kept up to date. All staff have the pupils' well-being at heart and play their part in ensuring that the school is a safe environment for all.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The teaching at Sedbergh Primary is characterised by well-prepared and well-organised lessons that have a strong sense of purpose. Staff have high aspirations for pupils and expect them to work hard and behave well. Pupils readily talk to each other to discuss and develop their ideas. Pupils say that teachers 'make learning fun' and that teachers help them when they are unsure. Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about their tasks and they check regularly during lessons that pupils are focused on their work.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Lessons proceed in a relaxed and friendly but purposeful atmosphere. The pupils are eager to learn and respond well to teachers' questioning.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. Work starts in the early years and builds effectively throughout key stage 1. From their different starting points, pupils make good progress.
- The development of reading and writing skills is given a high priority in the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to read and they keep careful logs of the books that they have read. Younger pupils commented that family members regularly listen to them read at home.
- Writing has become a much more important part of the curriculum since the time of the last inspection, including providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length for different purposes. The quality of pupils' handwriting is good, as is the general presentation of their work.
- Teachers plan engaging activities that pupils enjoy and these often act as a stimulus for writing. Pupils in Year 3 have developed their knowledge of past and present tenses in English by studying a famous painting of people enjoying a day out by a river. The pupils studied the painting and were able to identify appropriate words in both the past and present tense to describe what they could see.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that they have many opportunities to practise their calculation skills and develop their mathematical reasoning when solving problems. A high work rate is evident in pupils' books. The pupils enjoy mathematics, even when tasks challenge them considerably, such as when pupils in Year 4 used mirrors to identify lines of symmetry in different shapes. Pupils enjoy working and learning with their classroom partners to solve problems.
- Teachers' questioning skills are very good. They skilfully assess what pupils understand

and then provide follow-on questions to deepen their thinking. Similarly, where questioning is productive, staff encourage those pupils who appear a little reluctant to offer a response at first by asking them for a view.

- The inspection took place just a few weeks into the school year and some displays were still being constructed. That said, classrooms are bright and colourful with thought-provoking displays that celebrate pupils' work. Additional guidance to support pupils' learning is also imaginatively displayed to capture their interest and assist learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work very conscientiously, in line with the school's policy. They praise what the pupils have done well and provide guidance to help them to improve their work further. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning; they are directed well by teachers and are clear about their role.
- All pupils are making faster progress now but in some year groups the progress of the most able and least able pupils is not always as good as it should be. This is because the work set for them is not well suited to their abilities and teachers' expectations are too low.
- The way in which teachers assess, record and monitor the pupils' attainment and progress has been improved over recent months. As a result, there is greater consistency and accuracy throughout the school in judging pupils' progress. Teachers make assessments of the pupils' attainment and use their findings to check on progress and identify any dips in performance. Some of the changes to assessment practice are new and have not yet had sufficient time to become a full part of day-to-day routines.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors commented that they feel safe in school and they enjoy their lessons. They regard school as a caring place, as illustrated by one pupil who said, 'We're all very friendly and get on together'. Pupils also spoke about their awareness of keeping safe when using the internet.
- Leaders have ensured that staff and governors are trained effectively to help keep pupils safe. The school has well-considered policies in place which are adhered to by staff; consequently, the school is a safe environment. All adults, including visitors, are vetted as being suitable to work with children. Information relating to safeguarding is recorded rigorously.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that bullying is very rare and when it does happen it tends to be name-calling, which staff deal with quickly and effectively. The pupils commented that they knew who to go to should they ever feel unhappy.
- Older pupils are aware that unkind comments, including the use of racist or homophobic language, are hurtful and wrong.
- Parents appreciate the high quality of pastoral support that the school provides. As one parent stated, 'The school is caring and has a strong sense of community spirit'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They say that they enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in the school's very high attendance figures. Pupils are courteous and will hold doors open for each other and adults. The pupils who have cooked lunches make use of the adjoining secondary school's dining hall at a prescribed 'primary' time. Older and younger pupils sit together by choice and they chat about their day. Behaviour is good and clear routines ensure that social times run smoothly.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The pupils respond positively to these expectations and they are a credit to the school and to their community. They come to lessons wanting to learn and they move around the school sensibly and courteously. On occasions in a few lessons, the pupils are a little more passive and compliant rather than appearing enthusiastic and keen to learn.
- In all classes, around the school and outside on the playground, inspectors witnessed very positive behaviour. There have been no exclusions of pupils from the school at any time.
- Pupils contribute well to the development of the school. The school council meets regularly with senior leaders to discuss how things might improve in school. These discussions have included the possibility of building a climbing wall on the school grounds.
- Attendance is excellent and in the top 10% of all schools nationally.
- In a few classes, the pupils are a little passive and compliant and not as enthusiastic about learning as they are in other classes.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Senior leaders and governors have focused a lot of their attention and resources on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in school. The good teaching that now takes place means that pupils have made good progress. As a result, pupils' overall achievement throughout the school has improved and their achievement is good.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils with a secure grasp of phonics is also higher than the national figure.
- Assessments at the end of key stage 1 in 2015 showed a dip on previous years' performance, particularly for boys. Nearly all pupils achieved the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics but fewer reached the higher levels when compared to pupils nationally. The school's own data indicates that pupils completing key stage 1 in 2016 had made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2015, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling improved significantly on that of the previous year. Results were higher than national averages in all subjects. Pupils made good progress to achieve these results. The school's records for 2016

show that 80% of pupils reached age-related expectations in reading, 85% in writing and 75% in mathematics, under the new assessment system. Lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' books and discussions with pupils about their work all indicate that pupils make good progress in key stage 2.

- The school has improved its effectiveness in ensuring that most groups of pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those who join the school at different times, achieve well. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of books indicate that disadvantaged pupils in school are continuing to make good progress in line with their peers. The differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, made at least the progress expected of them in reading and writing in 2015, but their progress was less strong in mathematics. In the national tests in 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was above that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics but below in writing. In English grammar, punctuation and spelling, the proportion of most able pupils achieving well was higher than the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- The children entering the part-time Nursery class have a broad span of knowledge and skills but, overall, these are similar to those typically found. Children make a positive start in the Nursery class, settling in quickly to its routines and activities. The Nursery setting is colourful and vibrant, and staff are welcoming. The children are happy and enjoy learning and exploring the many opportunities provided for them.
- Effective teaching and a well-resourced and vibrant setting means that children in the early years learn quickly and make good progress. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved year on year since 2013, moving from 38% to 65% in 2015, which was similar to the national average. The school's own assessment data shows that the percentage of children achieving a good level of development in 2016 has been at least maintained. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- A particular strength of the early years department is the way that staff help children to settle into the school's routines quickly. This is very effective in developing the children's confidence in using different play equipment and learning resources which, in turn, helps to stimulate language and enhance their verbal communication skills. Children take part in many imaginative and exciting activities that encourage them to explore and find things out for themselves. During the inspection they enjoyed working with playdough in their 'funky fingers' exercising session and making colourful patterns with small beads.
- Resources are good and both the Nursery and Reception classes have their own dedicated outdoor education space. The outdoor areas are small, but they are used well and imaginatively by teachers to structure and focus the children's imaginative play and learning. Teaching in the early years is good; it builds on children's interests and helps to develop their love of learning. The children love working with letters and the sounds that they make. Effective and well-planned teaching means that all children make steady progress.
- The staff's expectations of behaviour are high and adults help children to understand

the importance of treating one another politely and with respect. As a consequence, children's behaviour is good. Children share resources and play and learn together harmoniously. They are supervised effectively by staff, who ensure that they are kept secure and safe while not hampering their imaginative play. Teaching promotes the importance of children listening carefully when information or instructions are being provided.

- The early years manager leads the provision well. She uses accurate and regular assessments to check children's progress and ensure that teaching activities are planned to fill any gaps in learning. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in 2016 reflects a three-year pattern of continuous improvement.
- Visits by staff to other schools to see outstanding practice and increased links with childcare and other agencies have helped strengthen the overall provision in the early years.
- Parents are kept well informed about how well their children are doing in the Nursery and Reception classes. Those parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were very appreciative of the staff and how they help their children to make progress, both in their learning and socially.

School details

Unique reference number	112233
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10019806

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sophie Lawson
Headteacher	Matthew Towe
Telephone number	01539 620 510
Website	www.sedberghprimary.org.uk
Email address	admin@sedbergh-pri.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 December 2014

Information about this school

- Sedbergh is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils are taught in single-year classes.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The Nursery class provides part-time early years provision. Pupils attend the Reception class full-time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- There have been significant changes to staffing and governance since the previous inspection.
- Following two periods of absence in 2015, the previous headteacher left the school in early 2016. During her absence the deputy headteacher became acting headteacher. In February 2016 an experienced executive headteacher was appointed from a local primary school to work in the school for two days per week. In April 2016 a new headteacher was appointed and he began his duties on 1 September 2016.
- A new chair and vice-chair of the governing body were appointed in 2015, along with other new members of the governing body.
- The school shares its site with the local high school, Settlebeck School.
- The school is part of the South Lakes Rural Partnership of primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school, including during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its plans for improvement. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the previous executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2 discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils on the playground and in lessons.
- Inspectors considered 46 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire and Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with parents informally.

Inspection team

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