

Sedbergh Primary School

Long Lane, Sedbergh, Cumbria, LA10 5AL

Inspection dates 2–3 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress from their starting points, because the quality of teaching is not consistently good. Pupils do less well in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve, of their behaviour and of how they present their work, are not always high enough.
- Pupils of different abilities are not always given work that is at the right level for them. The most able pupils, in particular, are not given work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently show pupils how to make their work better. When it does, pupils do not have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.
- Pupils are not always able to check how well they are doing because they are not shown precisely enough what they need to do to succeed.
- Pupils do not have enough exciting opportunities across the curriculum to develop their writing in a range of styles for different purposes.
- Pupils' individual targets do not always pinpoint how to enrich their language and vocabulary, in order to make their writing more varied and interesting.
- The early years provision requires improvement because children do not yet make better than expected progress from their starting points, particularly in writing.
- The role of middle leaders in improving teaching and learning is not yet fully established. Leaders do not yet provide teachers and teaching assistants with opportunities to see outstanding practice in other schools.
- Governors do not yet provide sufficient challenge to senior leaders, in order to hold them more fully to account for the school's performance and drive improvements more rapidly.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has improved and almost all pupils reach the expected standard in Year 1.
- The curriculum provides a range of rich and varied activities, which contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school and how safe they feel is reflected in their above average attendance.
- The school works well with parents to help them support their children's learning and to involve them in school life.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of what still needs to be done, clear plans to achieve this and a determination to do the best for all pupils. Improvements are already evident.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes, including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. They observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. They observed teaching in small support groups. They looked at examples of pupils' work to gain a view of teaching over time.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to parents informally before school. They took account of 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), and 20 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's most recent data on pupils' attainment and progress across the school, the school's own view of its effectiveness and its plans for improvement, and information relating to checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors looked at arrangements for safeguarding pupils and at records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is significantly below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority. In some classes there are no eligible pupils.
- The nursery class provides part-time early years provision. Full-time early years provision is provided in the Reception class.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been several changes to staff since the last inspection, including the recent appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise achievement for all pupils, by:
 - always having high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, of their behaviour and of how they present their work
 - ensuring that pupils of different abilities are given work which is at the right level for them and that is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers' marking consistently shows pupils exactly how to make their work better and that pupils have time to respond to teachers' comments
 - making pupils know more precisely what they need to do to succeed.
- Improve achievement in writing throughout the school, by:
 - giving pupils more exciting opportunities across the curriculum to write independently in different styles and for different purposes
 - planning more activities in the early years, both indoors and outdoors, which will encourage children, especially boys, to write
 - making sure that feedback to pupils pinpoints how to enrich their language and vocabulary, in order to make their writing more varied and interesting.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management, by:
 - fully establishing the role of middle leaders in improving teaching and learning
 - giving teachers and teaching assistants learn from opportunities to see outstanding practice in other schools
 - ensuring that governors always provide sufficient challenge to senior leaders, in order to hold them more fully to account for the school's performance and to drive improvements more rapidly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since their appointment, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of teaching and learning, in order to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. However, the actions taken by recently appointed senior leaders have not yet had sufficient time to have a full impact on improving the overall quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in writing. Since the previous inspection there has been a marked decline in standards due to staffing instability and teaching that has not always met individual pupils' needs well enough. Governors do not yet challenge senior leaders well enough, in order to hold them to account for the school's performance.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and clear plans for improvement are in place. There is a new team of middle leaders, who are beginning to have an impact on school improvement, through watching lessons, looking at pupils' work and contributing to staff training. The role of middle leaders in improving teaching and learning, however, is not yet fully established. There is a clear determination amongst governors and leaders to raise standards.
- New tracking systems mean that individual pupils' progress is followed much more closely than in the past. Teachers are now held more accountable for the progress pupils make in their classes. They meet regularly with senior leaders to identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should. Appropriate support is put in place at an earlier stage to speed up these pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders have introduced a rigorous system for checking on the quality of teaching and learning. They give teachers accurate feedback, so that they can clearly see what they are doing well and what they should do to improve. Leaders set teachers challenging targets to raise pupils' achievement and to enhance their contribution to overall school development. Teaching is, therefore, improving throughout the school. However, leaders do not give teachers and teaching assistants opportunities to learn from outstanding practice in other schools.
- The curriculum is planned well to interest and involve pupils. They particularly enjoy practical subjects, such as making models of Tudor houses or designing their own shoes. They talked excitedly about opportunities to dress up in historical costumes. However, pupils do not have enough exciting opportunities across the curriculum to write in a range of styles and for different purposes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They have good opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and the lives of others. Pupils found the First World War theme week particularly memorable, as they learnt about how it had affected the people in the local community. Their obvious respect and concern for others' different beliefs, values and traditions mean that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements in sport, especially their recent cross-country running success. The school uses the primary school sport funding well in order to introduce pupils to a range of different sports such as golf, tennis and bowls. Staff are having increased opportunities to develop their own skills and expertise in teaching physical education.
- The school works well to involve parents in the life of the school and in their children's learning. They organise well-attended workshops, such as on mathematics and e-safety. 'Bus books' enable communication with parents who live a long way from school. Parents are supportive of the school, and are enthusiastic and successful in raising funds for additional resources.
- Leaders make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent on supporting the very small number of eligible pupils, enabling them to make similar progress to other pupils and to join in all aspects of school life. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and the effective steps it takes to tackle discrimination.
- The local authority has previously provided light-touch support for the school, which has not been effective in helping the school in addressing its declining standards. However, the local authority has now identified the need to offer more targeted support and is in the process of helping the school to secure much needed improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body involve themselves fully in school life and receive a range of information, such as detailed reports and presentations from subject leaders. They have a good understanding of the data about pupils' performance. They are therefore well aware that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not yet good, and that pupils' progress in writing, in particular, needs to improve. Governors now ensure that only teachers who have met their performance management targets and made a good enough contribution to the school receive pay increases. They

are also keenly aware of their statutory responsibilities and ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met.

- However, governors also acknowledge that, whilst they have supported senior leaders in the actions taken to improve the school, they have not always challenged them sufficiently, in order to drive improvements more rapidly. They are keen to improve their skills in this area of their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A small minority of pupils does not always take enough pride in the way that they present their work and they can easily become distracted and start to misbehave when the work that they are given is not at the right level. Learning is, therefore, sometimes interrupted.
- For the most part, pupils say that they enjoy their learning and want to do well. When the work that they are given interests and challenges them, they have positive attitudes, work hard and are keen to talk about what they are learning.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They say how much they enjoy being in a small school where 'everyone knows you'. They mostly get on well together, and say that the school is a happy place. They readily work together and share ideas with each other as they learn.
- Pupils say that sometimes people call each other names, but that this is soon sorted out and friendships are re-established. They were particularly sensitive when they talked about how important it is to respect other people, and were very clear that to use terms such as 'gay' or to make racist remarks is wrong and never occurs in the school.
- Pupils have a keen sense of responsibility towards their school and towards others. They were eager to show the inspectors some new science equipment bought with money raised through a sponsored walk up a local fell. They feel it is important to raise money for charity because 'some people have nothing, not even clean water, whilst we have everything.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors have taken appropriate action to make the school a safe place for the pupils, but there is still one outside area currently being addressed in conjunction with the neighbouring high school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that they can talk to adults in school if they have any worries or concerns. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is, and the different types, including cyber-bullying. They say that it hardly ever happens and that problems are usually dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils also demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in other situations, including when using modern technology. The school's website provides parents with valuable information about safeguarding and e-safety.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Work in pupils' books, the school's assessment information and records of checks carried out on teaching, all indicate that the quality of teaching over time requires improvement.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve, of their behaviour and of how they present their work, are not yet always high enough. Pupils of different abilities are not always given work that is at the right level for them. For some pupils it is too easy and for others it is too hard. The most able pupils, in particular, are not always given work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Senior leaders have identified the need for a more consistent approach to marking pupils' work. There is evidence of more effective marking, however, this is not yet fully in place, so that some teachers' marking does not show pupils precisely what they need to do to make their work better. Pupils do not always have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' comments, even when they are helpful.
- Pupils' work indicates that teaching in most year groups is improving. In mathematics, there is a much more consistent emphasis on securing basic number and calculation skills at an earlier stage. Pupils now

have opportunities to read and think about a broader range of written texts. They are encouraged to make links between what they read and their spoken language and this is beginning to improve their writing.

- Clear explanations mean that pupils usually understand what they are expected to learn in lessons. However, they are not always able to check how well they are doing because the 'success criteria' they are given do not consistently show them precisely enough what they need to do to succeed.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils. Regular praise and encouragement mean that pupils feel that their efforts are valued.
- Questioning is often used effectively to check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions. For example, pupils in Year 4 were struggling to convert metric measures were helped to work through the process step by step. Where questioning is used most effectively, it also helps pupils develop their ideas and thoughts. For example, Year 6 pupils' responses to questions showed how they were gradually deepening their understanding of a film character's personality and actions to help them improve their own writing.
- Activities in a range of subjects are now usually planned well to interest pupils and gain their attention. For example, Year 3 pupils in science were keen to investigate different ways of insulating a mug to stop Santa's tea going cold. Resources and equipment are usually well planned and organised so that time is not wasted and learning is not interrupted as pupils move between activities.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not yet make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. In most year groups, the school's data for 2014 show that pupils made expected progress, but too few did better than this over time. Pupils generally reach broadly average standards at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics throughout the school. Effective teaching has improved the structure of pupils' written work, so that an average proportion of pupils reach the level expected for their age in the grammar, spelling and punctuation test at the end of Key Stage 2. However, while pupils' work indicates that their writing is improving, it also shows that pupils do not know well enough how to enrich their language and vocabulary, in order to make their writing more varied and interesting.
- Too few of the most able pupils reach standards which are above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because they are not given work that is specifically planned to challenge them and extend their learning further.
- The relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that there can be marked variations in achievement from year to year. There was a considerable dip in attainment and in the progress pupils made, particularly in writing, at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. The school's information shows that this was because of the larger proportion of pupils than usual in this year group with complex needs. The school's current data indicate that almost all pupils who are now in Year 6 are making at least the progress expected of them. Most pupils are predicted to reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, with an increased proportion attaining higher levels, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught successfully, through a range of activities that are well-matched to the needs of different pupils, and which make clear links between speaking, reading and writing letters and words. Pupils are eager to learn, standards have risen and almost all pupils now reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive a range of appropriate support to meet their needs, both in lessons and in small groups. They mostly make the same expected progress as other pupils, although some of them, including some younger pupils with very complex needs, are making progress better than this.
- The very small number of disadvantaged pupils across the school make progress which is similar to other pupils in the school. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 each year to make any comparison between their attainment and progress and that of other pupils nationally, and also their attainment compared to other pupils in the school, statistically reliable.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- The large majority of children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, although, due to some quite small year groups, this does vary. There is usually a small proportion of children who enter with skills above those expected, and sometimes a small number who have significant special educational needs.
- Most children make steady progress in the early years. By the end of the Reception class, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development, whilst it has improved over the past three years, is a little below average. This is mainly due to their weaker achievement in writing, particularly that of boys. Children are, however, increasingly well prepared for Year 1.
- The newly appointed early years leader provides good leadership. She has a clear vision to improve children's achievement, especially in writing. Staff have worked well together as a team to improve the outdoor areas in both the Nursery and Reception classes. They acknowledge that it is still too soon to show an impact on children's progress and that there still need to be more opportunities for children to write.
- The caring and nurturing environment means that children settle quickly and soon become confident and independent. Good systems are in place to keep them safe. Their good behaviour shows clearly that they feel happy and secure, and enjoy coming to school.
- Activities are mostly purposeful and well-planned. Children in the Reception class were thoroughly enjoying running 'snow' through their fingers as they retold the story of 'The Gruffalo's Child'. They showed how well they work together as they took turns and shared the pastry cutters to make salt dough Christmas decorations.
- Adults question children successfully in order to extend their learning. A small group of Nursery children thought hard before making the teaching assistant a cup of 'hot chocolate' to keep her warm in the outside 'café'.
- Systems are now in place and used by all staff to record what children do and to track their progress. These 'learning journals' are shared electronically with parents, who are also able to make contributions to children's assessments. There are good relationships with parents, who are kept well informed about what their children are learning and doing.

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	112233
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	449303

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Close
Headteacher	Deborah Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2008
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