

# North Walney Primary, Nursery & Pre-school

Duddon Drive, Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 3TN

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Between the last inspection and August 2016, leadership at all levels failed to maintain standards. Consequently, pupils' behaviour deteriorated, which led to a rapid decline in pupils' achievement.
- There has been considerable staff absence over the past three and a half years. This included the headteacher, who resigned her post at the end of May 2016. There are still significant levels of long-term absence of teachers and teaching assistants.
- Over the past three years, the quality of teaching has deteriorated. The school has lacked the much-needed strategic leadership to steer staff through difficulties within the school and to adopt the new national curriculum.
- The achievement of specific groups of pupils has declined more rapidly than others. Boys' attitudes to learning became poor, their attendance declined and their behaviour made it very difficult for teachers to teach.
- The discrepancy between the achievement and attitudes of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school increased. Staff failed to identify most-able students early enough and so they were not given suitable work that would have enabled them to reach their potential.
- Pupils lack a good understanding of what they are reading. They are not confident in expressing their opinions and ideas. Nor do they have the speaking skills required to do this well.
- The school has focused its attention on improving learning in English and mathematics, at the expense of other subjects. Leadership in these areas is underdeveloped.

### The school has the following strengths

- The impact that the new part-time headteacher has had on improving all aspects of the school, over a short period of time, has been outstanding.
- Governors are now much better equipped to both support the school and challenge the
- Children in the early years setting receive a good start to their education.
- Provision for safeguarding and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been consistently good over time.

headteacher with much more rigour.

## **Full report**

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

- Continue to improve boys' attitudes to learning so that they all:
  - value their education and their school
  - become more resilient and resist giving up when learning gets difficult
  - improve their behaviour.
- Continue to improve the achievement of all pupils, and specifically boys, the most able and the disadvantaged, by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide interesting and engaging topics and tasks
  - ensuring that teachers identify most-able pupils' potential early and have high expectations of what they can achieve
  - ensuring that topics and learning activities provide the right balance of support and challenge so that all pupils improve quickly
  - improving pupils' communication skills, particularly their ability to express their ideas and opinions clearly
  - developing pupils' reading comprehension skills.
- Broaden the range and increase the depth of topics studied in subjects apart from English and mathematics.
- Improve the capacity of subject leaders to evaluate accurately the quality of learning and achievement and develop their skills to promote further improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The quality of education has declined since the last inspection because, until recently, leadership has been weak. Extended absence of the headteacher and other key staff reduced the capacity of the school to maintain high standards. This resulted in a deterioration in pupil behaviour followed by declining achievement as teachers found it increasingly difficult to teach well. The requirement for schools at this time to adopt a new curriculum compounded the stress on the inexperienced staff.
- A variety of efforts were made to supplement strategic leadership at the school. However, with a deficit budget, the school was not in a position to appoint additional staff. The assistant headteacher, teachers and other staff rallied round the school and, with efforts beyond what could be expected of them, ensured that the school ran on a day-to-day basis. The local authority helped appoint an associate headteacher for two half days per week for the two terms between January and August of 2016.
- In September of 2016 the governors were able to negotiate the appointment of a headteacher with a proven record in improving schools. The new headteacher shares his time with this school, where he works three days per week, and Trumacar Primary School, Heysham, where he spends the other two days and is also headteacher. This has brought the much-needed strategic vision and authority the school needed together with the skilled support for teachers which was necessary to help them to teach as well as they did previously.
- Leadership at subject level continues to be weak. Staff have not received the support and training required to enable them to develop skills in evaluating the quality of their areas of responsibility. They are therefore not in a position to develop effective plans for improvement.
- Parents, pupils and staff all agree that the current headteacher has transformed the school in a surprisingly short period of time. One parent captured this when she said: 'Everyone now has faith in the school. That's us, children and staff.'
- Long-term absence of teachers and teaching assistants is still a problem. Pupils in Year 6 are currently with their third teacher this year and say that this disrupts their learning. However, this is managed much better now. The headteacher is providing excellent support for teachers, helping them regain their confidence. Staff morale was at rock bottom, but teachers now have a sense of value and self-worth because they know they are once again able to teach well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a very clear focus: to teach. The headteacher has eliminated superfluous distractions, ensuring that learning and pupils' personal development are at the heart of all that the school currently does. The school is a very purposeful environment. Resources are being modernised and improved.
- The headteacher works with all staff to help them pinpoint how they can improve. Training is much improved and the headteacher is able to call on skilled practitioners from other schools to support the development of North Walney's staff. Staff welcome this support. The headteacher has a detailed and accurate knowledge of the quality of all that goes on in the school. The appraisal of teachers is well organised and teachers

are very clear about what they are expected to achieve. Appraisal of teaching assistants is less well developed.

- The headteacher's accurate evaluation of the school has enabled him to develop an excellent school improvement plan. Delegated responsibilities are clear and tasks are timely. Criteria for evaluating success or otherwise are based firmly on improvements to pupils' learning and personal development.
- The leadership of the school's early years provision, safeguarding and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continued to be strong throughout the school's decline.
- Relationships with parents have improved considerably. They say they are now much better informed about how their children are performing at school. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were very complimentary about the support given to their children. Any additional funding the school receives for these children is very well spent.
- The school's focus on improving basic skills in English and mathematics has resulted in insufficient time being directed to other subjects. Although pupils study subjects like art and science, their levels of development in these are not as good as seen nationally. The curriculum is not sufficiently broad and balanced.
- Until September, any additional funding the school received to support disadvantaged pupils was not targeted at the provision for these specific children. Currently the barriers to learning for every disadvantaged child are identified and a strategy developed to help them. Now funding provides for a wide range of support, including for pupils' emotional development and building their self-esteem.
- The school receives additional funding to improve sports and physical education. The school spends this well, employing local sports coaches to work with all pupils in a variety of activities.
- The school has always promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through activities like residential visits and the Year 6 visit to London and through the religious education curriculum. This aspect of the school has also improved this year. There is now a greater focus on prompting better attitudes and personal development through daily and weekly celebrations. Pupils are introduced to a 'value' each week. Throughout the week, staff will note when pupils display that value. The pupil in each class who is best at displaying the value is entitled to wear the 'green jumper' for the following week. Celebration is becoming a very important and popular part of the school routine.

## **Governance of the school**

- Until September 2015, the governing body was not equipped to prevent the deteriorating quality of education within the school. The local authority conducted a review of governance which was very effective in helping the governing body restructure and begin to understand what it was required to do. In addition, a national leader of school governance supported the governors very well and developed their key skills. Four new members have recently joined the governing body so that, with the

improved structure, more clarity of roles and improved skills, governors have much stronger capacity to hold the headteacher to account and offer support to the school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding within the school have a good understanding of how to manage difficult situations skilfully, ensuring that all pupils are safe. They work well with other agencies who share responsibility for children's safety and protection.
- Governors ensure that staff are vetted appropriately. Staff receive frequent and up-to-date training. Teachers know what to look out for and how to respond if they have a concern about safeguarding.
- Pupils look out for each other because they have a well-developed sense of care and responsibility. Pupils seek guidance from staff and confide in them because they know that staff have their very best interests at heart.
- Pupils are taught well how to stay safe. This includes while they are on their own in the community and when using social media. The school's systems for filtering unsuitable websites through its computer network are effective.
- Allegations of bullying are always fully investigated by the school and, if appropriate, by outside agencies so that necessary actions can be taken. School records and discussions with pupils indicate that there is no bullying in the school and pupils are confident that if it did happen, staff would deal with it well.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been good enough. Teachers have struggled without good-quality guidance and support. Their expectations of what their pupils could achieve have been too low. A narrow curriculum and poor behaviour management have contributed to boys, in particular, both disrupting lessons and underachieving.
- Although the attendance of teachers is improving, long-term absence is still making learning disjointed.
- Since September teachers have had a better sense of purpose. They now know more clearly what is expected of them. Teachers feel that they are now given better advice and support. The management of teaching is now stronger and more effective.
- The teaching of reading is more systematic and there is a greater focus on ensuring that pupils understand what they are reading. The headteacher has found a considerable amount of additional funding to reinvigorate the library and reading schemes. There is now a much wider range of non-fiction and fiction, including age-appropriate versions of the classics.
- In most classes, pupils are expected to read frequently at home. Teachers from Year 1 to Year 4 have good, established programmes of guided reading. Parents are invited to

join their children and teachers on Fridays at 'book and a biscuit' sessions. Dads of boys are particularly encouraged to join to act as good role models for their sons.

- Teachers are now adapting better to teaching the new mathematics curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are securing a good understanding of basic mathematical concepts and then using these to solve a wide range of problems. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are having to fill in gaps in their learning before they can move on to work more appropriate for their age.
- Teachers in early years and key stage 1 are now identifying pupils who are particularly able. They now have higher expectations of these pupils and give them work which matches their ability. In key stage 2, these pupils are not so clearly identified and when they are, they are often expected to do more of the same level of work rather than more difficult work.
- In September, the headteacher introduced a good system to monitor the progress of pupils. Through support and guidance, teachers are improving the accuracy of their assessments. Teachers are quickly adapting to this new system. It enables both an overview of how well classes are performing and detailed information identifying individuals who are falling behind.
- Teachers' management of teaching assistants has improved. Teaching assistants now have a key role in supporting learning. They are adaptable and improving their skills in helping all pupils. Some are particularly skilled in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Others work with different groups of pupils, ensuring that they progress well.
- The system for helping pupils who do not understand a topic, and so preventing them from falling behind, is very effective. Any pupil who struggles with their mathematics or English in the morning session will be given personalised support that afternoon. The teaching assistant who had been working in the class that morning will lead the additional session in the afternoon.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Over time, pupil's personal development has not been good enough. This has resulted in some pupils, mainly boys, displaying poor attitudes to others and to their own learning.
- The school has added to the range of activities, celebrations and opportunities that are intended to promote improved personal development. These are now having an impact and all pupils, including boys, are keen to show off their recent achievements to adults.
- Pupil welfare is very strong. Safeguarding is strong. All adults in the school know pupils very well, and often their families too. All adults show great sensitivity and professionalism towards caring for pupils.

- There is an increasing number of very effective support systems and sessions specifically designed to help those pupils who need to develop their emotional understanding and social skills. Pupils generally are improving their confidence and self-esteem.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Parents, pupils and teachers say that there has never been a serious bullying problem in the school but that there has been poorly managed behaviour. Previously, teachers did not feel able to challenge the poor behaviour of some pupils, particularly boys. They said there was no support to back them up. In some classes, poor behaviour slowed learning on a daily basis.
- Records show that, despite there being a significant allegation of bullying last year, the number of incidents was in fact very low. They continue to be almost non-existent. This supports the pupils' view that bullying does not exist in the school.
- Parents, pupils and teachers say that there is now an entirely different culture in the school. The headteacher has defined clear expectations. Positive behaviour is rewarded and poor behaviour punished. Much discussion has taken place within the school about how to 'unlock' the potential of individual pupils and help them engage positively with the school. Generally lessons now flow with no interruption. There are very few boys who now need significant and skilled management to enable them to behave well.
- All celebrate this considerable and very important improvement to the school. They say it has been the single most important improvement that has enabled better teaching and achievement.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and show courtesy to other pupils and adults. At break and lunchtimes they play harmoniously and mix well. Different genders and age groups play happily together, the older ones looking after the younger.
- Attendance was below average and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was weak. Attendance rates for this year are about average for primary schools, and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is much improved. This has happened because the school follows up absence much more rigorously. Parents are much more aware of the importance of ensuring that their children attend well. Lessons are more interesting and valuable.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Numbers of pupils sitting end-of-key-stage external examinations are small. When headline results are published, results can appear to swing significantly from year to year. In this school, one pupil absent from a national test could lower the overall pass rate by about 10 percentage points. Even taking this into account, standards reached by Year 6 last year were poor.
- The decline in the quality of teaching over a number of years had a negative effect on the achievement of most classes across the school. The legacy of this

underachievement still exists because pupils have so much to catch up on. So, despite teaching improving, pupils are still not attaining the standards expected of them.

- Standards of pupils currently in Year 5 are particularly low because, for many, their starting points were low. Standards of pupils currently in Year 4 are much closer to those seen nationally.
- Last year, pupils left to start their secondary school not being able to read well. Although stronger than reading, their mathematical ability was also weak.
- Year 6 pupils appear to have left last year with writing being their strongest of the three assessed subjects. Standards in writing for current pupils are generally weak. Since September, an external moderator has evaluated the quality of pupils' writing. She found pupils at key stage 1 producing the standard of writing expected of them. Pupils in key stage 2 are improving their writing, particularly in Years 3 and 4, but all from a low base.
- A considerable weakness in 2016 was the absence of any pupil achieving a high standard in any subject. For some time now, there has been no rigorously applied expectation of teachers to identify most-able pupils. This neglect has resulted in the most able pupils underachieving because they were not given challenging work which was matched to their capabilities. All teachers and teaching assistants are now fully aware of this responsibility. However, before these pupils can start to excel, large gaps in their understanding need to be filled.
- There has been a large difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Boys' attitudes to school and their learning deteriorated. Generally, their behaviour was poor. These troublesome boys did not find topics interesting. This difference continues to exist, but it is not nearly as significant.
- There have been large differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Much more attention is now being paid to these pupils in school and they are now being given specific support and guidance. This is helping them improve their rates of progress and there are early signs of them catching up with others in the school.
- Phonics has been taught well in Year 1 and in early years. Last year a larger proportion of pupils than is seen nationally met the expected standard. Pupils can read words and sentences well in the sense that they know what sounds the letters make. However, they are not as strong at understanding what the words and sentences mean. This is having a negative impact on all subjects in later years.
- Pupils are not confident in expressing their ideas. They often appear to be shy when asked a question. Their vocabulary is underdeveloped when compared to other children of their age. This is hampering pupils' ability to think clearly and then to articulate their thoughts. It is also limiting their ability to write well.
- Pupils have not attained well in other subjects because there has been too little time spent on teaching these. The work that pupils have done in science and humanities, for example, is generally good. However, they have covered far too few topics and not in sufficient depth.
- These weaknesses were seen throughout key stage 1 and key stage 2.



- With the exception of the narrow curriculum, historical weaknesses are now being addressed successfully through strong leadership, improved teaching and behaviour management.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are progressing at least as well as other pupils in the school. They are well supported because teachers have a good understanding of how best to meet their needs.
- In the past pupils leaving North Walney for secondary school have not been well enough prepared. Their basic skills have been weak. Attitudes of some boys to their education were poor and they did not behave well. This, however, is changing rapidly.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The local authority reviewed the early years provision in September 2015. This coincided with the appointment of a new leader of the school's early years department. The review identified that the inexperienced leader needed support to develop their capacity to lead and improve the provision. Training was very effective and it has contributed to a significant improvement in this provision. The leadership of early years is now good and the provision continues to improve and expand.
- When children join the school, whether as two-, three- or four-year-olds, in Nursery or Reception, their levels of development are low. This is particularly evident in their communication and social skills.
- Teaching is structured well and engages children, helping them to progress well. This was particularly evident when children were learning about shapes and how squares and rectangles can be combined to make cubes and cuboids. Children listened well to the teacher, who ensured that all children developed the vocabulary they needed to explain why a cube is not a cuboid. At the end of that short taught session, children seamlessly and with no fuss move quickly onto a whole range of activities, some building their own 3D shapes, others dressing up.
- By the time children leave the early years setting they have not quite caught up with their peers in other schools, but have a good foundation to build from in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers of two-year-olds work closely with children, constantly encouraging them to talk or sing. They encourage the development of their social skills by ensuring that all play in groups or pairs. Their physical development is promoted through play on a good range of play equipment, scooters and bikes.
- Children leave Reception with good standards of behaviour. They are taught how to share and take their turn. They know how to talk to other children and adults. They are keen to learn, happy and enthusiastic.
- Teachers are aware which children attract additional funding because they are considered to be disadvantaged. Teachers keep a special eye on these children to make sure that they progress as quickly as others.
- The indoor environment is generally brighter and more stimulating than the outdoor environment.
- Good relationships are built with children's parents through good communications. Parents who spoke to the inspector were keen to describe how good this is compared

to other experiences they have had. A good example is the 'challenge book' used in Reception. This is one system teachers use to communicate with parents and it helps them know what their child has been doing and how they can help them improve even more.

- The quality of this provision is better than that in the rest of the school because improvements to leadership were established earlier and so improvement in teaching and care has had time to make a bigger impact on children's progress and behaviour.

## School details

Unique reference number	112240
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10024397

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Brewerton
Headteacher	Paul Slater
Telephone number	01229 471781
Website	<a href="http://www.northwalney.cumbria.sch.uk">www.northwalney.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@northwalney.cumbria.sch.uk">head@northwalney.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	12–13 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school serves part of the community of Walney Island, which sits just off the south-west Cumbrian coast. It is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Due to extended periods of absence over the past three and a half years, the school has experienced considerable disruption to its staffing, including the post of headteacher. Temporary arrangements were put in place, including the appointment of an associate headteacher for two half days per week for two terms. The substantive headteacher resigned her post at the end of August 2016. Governors appointed a temporary headteacher from the beginning of September. He shares his time with this school, spending three days per week there, and Trumacar Primary School, Heysham, where he spends two days and is also headteacher. While this has brought stability to the senior leadership of the school, there are still members of staff on extended absence.

- All pupils who attend the school have White British heritage.
- About four in ten pupils on roll are considered to be disadvantaged and this is well above average.
- About a quarter of pupils have special education needs and/or disabilities. This is above average.
- The breakfast club is managed by the school and run by support staff.
- In March 2014, the governors took on responsibility for offering provision for two-year-olds following the closure of a private provider.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and a group of staff. He met with a group of parents and a group of Year 6 pupils.
- The inspector spoke to many pupils informally at breaktimes and in classes.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority and four members of the governing body.
- School documents were scrutinised, including: safeguarding checks; information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also visited classrooms with the headteacher to speak with pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.
- The inspector examined child-protection information, procedures and practice.
- The inspector considered 44 responses to the online parent questionnaire. He took account of responses from 17 staff to the Ofsted questionnaire. The inspectors considered the views of the three parents who texted their comments and three who emailed comments.

## Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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