

North Walney Primary, Nursery & Pre- School

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

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

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

- Boys and girls manage their own feelings and behaviour well. They have good relationships with one another and with staff. They respect differences between people. They care about their local environment on Walney Island and the wider world.
- Due to the determined work of leaders and staff, teaching is good. Parents, carers and pupils said that the quality of teaching has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils want to be at school; they are keen to study.
- Leaders and governors have made certain that the curriculum is much more stimulating than in the past. Nevertheless, some aspects of the geography curriculum are not planned to build fully on what pupils have learned previously.
- Pupils understand how democracy works at school. They feel valued and listened to. Even so, their knowledge of democracy at a local or national level is limited.
- Given the strong improvements in teaching, learning, behaviour and the ethos among staff and pupils, it is little wonder that parents and pupils said that leaders have transformed the work of the school.
- Leaders and staff make sure that pupils feel safe at the school.
- Current pupils make good progress, for instance in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history. While the quality of pupils' writing is improving markedly, the legacy of weak teaching in the past continues to affect some pupils' enthusiasm for writing.
- Leaders and governors have a precise, accurate understanding of the work of the school. They support staff well in improving their teaching. Staff morale is high. Subject leaders are realistic and effective in their work to improve different subjects at the school. Leaders have set in place clear actions to further improve pupils' attainment.
- Children in the early years make good progress. They are confident learners and develop many essential skills, for instance in mathematics and in their communication and language. Teaching is good. Nevertheless, some activities that children choose for themselves are less challenging than when adults lead tasks.
- Staff assess the needs and abilities of all children in the early years skilfully and make good links with parents and with other professionals. However, the information that staff record in the two-year-old progress checks does not contain enough detail.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the geography curriculum by making sure that planned lessons are part of a clear sequence of learning, building on what pupils have studied before and what pupils will study next.
- Improve the teaching of writing even further so that all pupils become enthusiastic, skilled writers.
- Teach pupils how democracy works locally and nationally, as well as ensuring that pupils develop their vocabulary to talk about democracy.
- Make sure that information included in the checks on the progress of the two-year-old children is as comprehensive as other records for these children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the priorities of the school, including the work of individual teachers. They know the school well and act on clear plans to improve the school further. As a result, the school is once again providing pupils with a good quality of education.
- Leaders ensure that teachers work not only as individuals, but as part of a team, sharing their skills with colleagues. Subject leaders take a much more active role in raising questions about their subjects with colleagues. They now give a steer to teachers about what should improve. For example, in geography, staff develop pupils' mapping skills well because of advice from the subject leader. In mathematics, the subject leader has made successful links with other schools to enhance her work at North Walney. These skills are shared so that all teachers are now much more confident and well supported in their mathematics teaching.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' learning is based on important values such as responsibility, peace and freedom. Leaders and staff teach values in assemblies and through a wide range of other activities. Pupils know how their views matter in elections for the school council, but they do not understand what democracy means at a local or national level or use much vocabulary associated with this concept.
- Several parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) expressed to me their absolute confidence in the staff's ability to meet their child's needs. They said that staff fully include pupils in the life of the school. Early help for pupils with SEND starts successfully in the two-year-olds' classroom and builds throughout the school. The SEN coordinator (SENCo) actively speaks out on behalf of families when the needs of pupils with SEND need attention from other agencies. Leaders spend SEN funding carefully to strengthen the help in classes for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND make good progress.
- The formal support from the executive headteacher has made a positive difference to staff at North Walney Primary School. For example, one pupil said: 'When he arrived, he made the school better by teaching everyone to respect one another.' Staff at North Walney told me how they have valued the assistance from staff at Trumacar Primary School in Heysham, Lancashire.
- Leaders and governors have made sure that the curriculum at the school has improved in recent years. Teachers plan topics in several subjects, for example mathematics, that build carefully on pupils' previous learning. Teachers organise wider experiences that deepen pupils' learning. For instance, in geography in key stage 1, pupils have attended an outdoor education centre for six half-days this year. Through these experiences, they have developed new skills, such as naming trees, working as a team in rafting, and orienteering themselves in an unfamiliar area.
- Leaders have resolved past issues of teacher workload; for instance one member of staff said: 'We now only have to complete data entry about assessments of pupils three times a year rather than originally six.' Leaders have created a stronger, team

approach to teaching, which staff said has helped to, 'minimise the repetition of paperwork'.

- Leaders' use of PE and sport funding enables many pupils to participate and develop their skills in after-school games, sports and activities. Pupils said to me that this is one of their most favourite aspects of school because of the many new skills that they develop.
- In the past, the school spent much more money than it received from the government. Leaders and governors are working effectively with the local authority to resolve this important issue. Senior leaders make sure that new spending is only from the money that is available. Leaders have participated in raising extra school funds with parents and secured grants from other organisations for specific projects. Senior leaders have even completed minor school maintenance themselves, to help to reduce expenditure. Leaders spend the current school budget and extra funding wisely, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors agree with parents that the atmosphere in the school is much improved, being happy, calm and settled. They are delighted with the improvements in pupils' behaviour, attitudes, learning and outcomes. They said that leaders respond much better to concerns from parents about their children's education.
- Governors check on the work of the school regularly and systematically. They know that teaching has strengthened. They challenge leaders and are determined that pupils' outcomes continue to improve.
- Governors make appropriate checks on the school's work to safeguard pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have a good knowledge of the local safeguarding risks to pupils. They make sure that staff remain well informed and vigilant about child protection issues. Leaders and staff support pupils' well-being according to their individual needs. Leaders maintain clear, secure records about pupils' safeguarding. They make good links with other agencies and with families to protect pupils. Leaders ensure that staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are aware of national issues such as knife crime. All pupils who made their views known to me said that they feel safe in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching over time has improved markedly and is now good. This is because leaders, including the executive headteacher, have helped staff patiently and skilfully to develop their teaching skills. Teachers at the school now believe in their ability to support and inspire pupils. They have regained their determination and commitment to work in more effective and creative ways. Pupils and parents said that

they have seen this positive change in staff. Pupils want to come to school; they enjoy lessons and wider activities.

- While in the past teachers made too much use of printed worksheets as part of teaching, this is no longer the case. Staff make sure that pupils have valuable opportunities to develop their ideas in writing in a range of subjects, as well as in English. This has gone some way to improving pupils' skills in writing, but teachers do not always enthuse pupils to enjoy writing.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils said that mathematics teaching now challenges them in fun ways and that this helps them to learn better. This is evident in the quality of how they approach mathematical challenges set by teachers and in their written work.
- The teaching of phonics is successful because of staff's good subject knowledge. Pupils use their phonics skills confidently when reading unfamiliar words. Teachers regularly read stories aloud to pupils to teach them about different authors and types of books.
- In science, teachers plan worthwhile activities that help pupils to enjoy learning. For example, they tracked the journey of a sandwich to illustrate the role of the digestive system.
- In the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, teachers and teaching assistants work together successfully. Staff are well prepared for lessons and they communicate clearly with each other to support pupils. They give skilful assistance to pupils with SEND, which helps these pupils to flourish.
- Improved teaching skills and the emphasis on pupils' good behaviour mean that staff are focused purposefully on planned activities. No time is wasted, rather there is a culture that time in classrooms should be spent learning. Pupils engage very positively in their studies. Their books indicate that this is typical over time.
- Staff explain new learning clearly to pupils. They expect pupils, including those with SEND, to attempt tasks for themselves and to persist when work becomes more difficult. Staff use questions skilfully to enhance pupils' understanding.
- Increasingly, teachers give extra challenge to the most able pupils. For instance, in mathematics and science activities, staff help pupils to deepen their comprehension of specific concepts when they grasp new learning quickly.
- As part of the improved culture of teaching, teachers now work together much more collaboratively. For instance, they consult with one another when using assessment information to decide what knowledge to revisit in planned lessons or whether pupils are ready for new topics. In most subjects, teachers follow a carefully planned sequence of learning. This is not the case in geography, where some topics do not build fully on pupils' prior learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils with whom I spoke were self-confident and understand what will help them to succeed in their education.
- Pupils are confident to talk about their feelings because staff regularly teach them the vocabulary and strategies to positively manage their thoughts and emotions.
- Leaders and staff give pupils good opportunities to develop respectful attitudes towards other people and communities. Pupils respect that some families have two parents of the same gender. They understand that skin colour is not a barrier to people sharing life together. Pupils know that disabled people have abilities that help them to succeed.
- Bullying is rare at the school. Pupils said that they are extremely confident that staff would quickly resolve any issues. They said that other pupils do not bully them on social media. Pupils know how to protect their privacy when online and how to report any concerns about the online behaviour of other people.
- Pupils reported that their learning at school about safety is popular and helpful. They know how to stay safe, for example when cycling on the road as well as how to keep their bodies private.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- At the previous inspection, boys' behaviour was identified as an issue. However, lessons are no longer spoiled by the behaviour of any pupils. Boys and girls behave sensibly because they are self-disciplined. Pupils told me that the school's behaviour system works well. A recent school survey found that parents regard staff to be 'firm and fair'.
- Disruption in classes is now low-level and it is minor issues, such as pupils occasionally not sitting properly on their chairs.
- Pupils arrive at school and lessons promptly and eager to do their best.
- Staff follow up pupils' absence from school quickly and clearly with the school office. Due to the determined work of leaders and staff, current pupils' attendance at school is good and there has been a marked decrease in pupils' persistent absence. Disadvantaged pupils have good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The small and widely varying numbers of pupils in each class and the variety of times when some pupils leave or join the school mean that it is not meaningful to report the published data about the school. However, school information and pupils' books indicate that pupils, including boys, make good progress in a wide range of subjects and across years.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points. This is because staff and the SENCo give pupils the support that they need. In classes, pupils with SEND are fully included and other pupils understand what inclusion means.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- The much-improved quality of teaching means that the most able pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are skilled, enthusiastic readers. In Year 1, they use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. In key stage 2, pupils, including the less able, read fluently. They enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. However, some pupils do not always recall enough detail of what they have read to compare the strengths and skills of different authors. Teachers have set in place many improvements to resolve this issue.
- In key stage 2, the standard of presentation of work by pupils has improved markedly in mathematics and English. Many pupils write enthusiastically using a rich and varied vocabulary. On the other hand, some pupils are not as eager to write and do not produce similar richness in their writing. This is because in the past they found lessons uninspiring and they lost their enthusiasm.
- Pupils understand the importance of mathematics for their present and future lives. They are adept at solving mathematical problems and can explain their reasoning to others. They understand the importance of making mistakes en route to resolving complex questions. Pupils have a secure understanding of multiplication facts because teachers have made this aspect of learning so much fun. Pupils are determined to learn even more mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. They deepen their geographical knowledge of Walney Island and the Lake District through lessons at school and a series of well-planned trips. They have a good knowledge of mapping and how to use published maps and coordinates to navigate themselves. However, in some geography topics pupils do not learn in depth because planned work does not build enough on their previous studies.
- In history, pupils now have a much more accurate appreciation of key national and world events because of better teaching. For example, they know the importance of the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War. They understand about life in England at the time of the Great Fire of London in 1666 and where this event happened in a chronology of important national events.
- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils are confident to conduct experiments and to think scientifically. They make reasonable predictions about the results of experiments. Pupils understand how science helps people to live healthy lives as well as its role in the workplace.
- Pupils acquire many essential abilities that they need for secondary school. For instance, pupils understand the importance of effort, they act with much self-discipline and they value teamwork. They are confident to talk about their education with adult visitors, such as an inspector. Leaders and staff give pupils a valuable introduction to the world of employment. Pupils understand that their future working life may be in the nearby town of Barrow-in-Furness or much further afield.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is led and managed well. Staff in each class work successfully as a team. The early years leader makes good links with other schools to develop her expertise in the early years so that she can effectively assist staff at North Walney.
- Staff from the two-year-olds' class and the combined Nursery/Reception class link closely together in developing their work. They also make sure that children have appropriate opportunities to play together, for example when learning outdoors.
- Children make good progress from starting points that are below those found typically. For instance, an increasing number of children start at the school in nappies, but staff give children much support to take themselves to the toilet and become more independent. This helps them to be fully ready for learning in key stage 1.
- Staff teach children to love books and stories, as well as understand the sounds that letters make. Staff use non-fiction books to teach children important knowledge, for example about growing plants from seeds.
- Activities throughout the early years are full of conversation and play. For example, staff working with two-year-olds speak warmly and gently with children and encourage them to use words to express their ideas and needs.
- Staff support children skilfully when tasks are led by adults. For example, the teacher taught children to divide a set of plastic bricks into two equal sets. Nearby, a teaching assistant helped younger children to repeat a mathematical pattern with plastic counters. However, when children choose activities for themselves, some learning lacks challenge, particularly for Reception children.
- Children behave positively and quickly develop the confidence to become keen investigators. They want to learn. Parents are delighted with their children's love of school. Children with SEND are supported successfully in the early years.
- Staff give children many opportunities to be physically active. For instance, children learn to lift heavy wooden blocks, kick a ball, ride a scooter and to climb with confidence. Staff supervise and assist children carefully to ensure that they are safe.
- From the moment that children join the school, staff assess children's knowledge, skills and attitudes carefully. They use this information well when they plan teaching. They document children's learning thoughtfully and share this with parents and as appropriate with other professionals. In the class for two-year-olds, staff complete many worthwhile assessment records but recently changed the way that they record the required checks on the progress of the two-year-old children. The new format does not include enough information.

School details

Unique reference number	112240
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10087834

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Brewerton
Headteacher	Paul Slater
Telephone number	01229 471 781
Website	www.northwalney.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	head@northwalney.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is located on Walney Island, which sits just off the south-west Cumbrian coast. It is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and live on the island.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is average.
- Some children start at the school from two years of age, others join at later points throughout the school.
- The two-year-olds have a separate classroom. Nursery and Reception children are taught as one class.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club called Natterjacks.

- Since September 2016, an executive headteacher has led the school, being on site up to three days each week. He also leads Trumacar Primary School in Heysham, Lancashire and works locally in the Queen Katherine multi-academy trust. The executive headship role at North Walney concludes at the end of summer 2019 when the assistant headteacher at the school will become the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' activities and behaviour throughout the school. He conducted almost all observations jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read from Year 2 and Year 3.
- The inspector met regularly with the executive headteacher and assistant headteacher throughout the inspection to discuss their reviews of the school and plans for improvement.
- The inspector held meetings with the SENCo and the leaders for English, mathematics, geography and early years. He also met with the manager for the two-year-olds' class.
- The inspector spoke by telephone to an adviser from Cumbria local authority.
- The inspector considered a sample of pupils' workbooks in mathematics, English, science, geography and history from key stage 1 and key stage 2. He scrutinised a sample of assessment records of two-year-olds and other documentation about the learning of children in the early years.
- The inspector spoke with pupils around the school. He met with a random sample of eight pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. He held a meeting with 11 pupils from the school council. He considered two responses from pupils to an Ofsted questionnaire.
- The inspector met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body and reviewed letters sent by two governors.
- The inspector took into account responses from 22 staff to an Ofsted survey and a letter sent by another member of staff.
- The inspector studied the 26 responses from parents to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the 18 free-text comments. He spoke with some parents as they brought their children to school on the first day of the inspection. He held a meeting with five parents at their request. He considered two letters from parents sent to Ofsted. He reviewed the findings of a recent school survey of parents' views.
- The inspector analysed the content of the school's website and the policies about safeguarding, equality and behaviour and curriculum documents. He reviewed leaders' records of the checks completed on adults' suitability to work with pupils at the school and sampled a safeguarding file.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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