

Dearham Primary School

Dearham, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 7HR

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Dearham inspires pupils to thrive in both their personal and academic development.
- Pupils of all ages are inspired by the adults around them. They are eager to learn and achieve high levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- All pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, are treated as individuals and make outstanding progress.
- Outstanding teaching stimulates and supports pupils. This is due to the skills, dedication and commitment of teachers, teaching assistants and visiting specialists. They work extremely well together to plan lessons which enthuse pupils.
- Teachers continually measure pupils' understanding of their work and use this to plan lessons which meet the needs of every individual. Occasionally in lessons, pupils do not always have long enough to find out things for themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From an early age, pupils enjoy coming to school. They all show a great deal of respect towards each other and to all the staff and visitors.
- Together, all staff, members of the governing body, volunteers and visitors create an exceptional environment in which to learn. This contributes to the pupils being extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education which is very much appreciated by pupils and their parents.
- The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body are totally committed to continually improving Dearham. They thoroughly check on the quality of teaching and this has led to continuous improvement in pupils' performance across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 teachers and visited 18 lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Discussions were held with school staff, two groups of pupils, senior teachers and subject leaders, parents and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and development plans, records of pupils' attainment and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour and pupils' work.
- The inspection team took account of the six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and an additional 22 received during the inspection.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie McGrane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dearham is an average size primary school. The numbers of pupils attending the school are increasing.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with that found nationally.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Approximately one quarter of pupils joins the school during Key Stage 2.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school holds the Healthy School Award, Activemark and is an accredited International School in addition to being enrolled with Kidsafe. It is part of the Maryport Consortium and a Creative Partnership school.
- There have recently been additional staff appointed to the school.
- The headteacher is a National Professional Qualification for Headteacher's assessor for the National College and a Primary Academy Associate for the Department for Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase further the amount of time in lessons for pupils to work out things for themselves and show they can work on their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children settle very quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of highly effective links with parents. From a young age they learn how to respect each other, the adults around them and their school environment.
- Children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally well below those typically expected for their age. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are well above the national average. Together with their development as responsible young people, this gives them an excellent preparation with which to start secondary school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children develop an eagerness for learning as a result of opportunities to engage in activities led by adults as well as exploring and finding out things for themselves both in class and outdoors. They develop an eagerness for learning which helps to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress overall through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Pupils continue to make exceptional progress throughout Years 3 to 6. This includes those who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. A significant proportion of pupils joins the school during Key Stage 2 with skills that are typically lower than those expected for their age and they too make outstanding progress.
- As a result of excellent teaching and very precise support for those who need extra help from time to time, standards in writing and mathematics are above average and just above average in reading by the end of Year 2.
- From an early age, pupils develop a love of books. This was seen first hand in the Early Years Foundation Stage as the children excitedly engaged in the story of 'The Stick Man'. Excellent teaching of the links between letters and the sounds they make results in the younger children swiftly gaining confidence in reading. Children who read to the inspectors clearly demonstrated that they could work out unfamiliar words for themselves. They were also able to re-tell their story in their own words which demonstrated a good understanding of what they had read. By the time pupils leave school, they are extremely competent readers.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The headteacher has been relentless in driving improvements in teaching, resulting in the quality of teaching now being outstanding overall. The progress of pupils is measured and recorded precisely to help inform teachers' planning of lessons to meet individual pupils' needs. There is early and highly effective help for pupils whose progress is occasionally not quick enough.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding as a result of exceptionally well-planned lessons. Teachers provide on-going opportunities for pupils to learn through a very wide range of activities and at a rapid pace, which highly motivates, continually engages pupils and challenges their understanding. In a Year 1 reading lesson for example, pupils were shown some images for which they had to think of an appropriate word. They were then challenged to think about what each word had in common and were excited to find out what the answer was. They quickly moved on to recognising the sound written on cards which were mixed up with other sounds and writing their own words containing the sound. Pupils were clearly enjoying their learning and the teacher was highly skilled in monitoring progress and moving children on to their next steps for learning.
- Similarly, in a Year 5 class, pupils were working as detectives to solve a mystery which was told through a poem. The teachers used highly effective questioning techniques to encourage pupils to highlight key words and extracts from the poem which provided clues. They thoughtfully decided which characters from the poem they would like to interview and then, in pairs,

rehearsed their open-ended questions in order to gain more evidence. This showed how exceptionally well pupils were able to work on their own and explore ideas for themselves. In a few lessons, however, there is not enough time given for pupils to work out things for themselves.

- Regular and high quality marking helps pupils to understand how to improve their work. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn from their own and each other's work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- From an early age, children learn how to value each other and their environment. There is an exceptionally strong ethos of mutual respect starting in the Nursery and continuing throughout the school. This leads to pupils feeling happy, safe and secure. One parent commented that his child 'can't wait to come to school'. This is reflected in their above-average attendance and their punctuality in the mornings, which is very good indeed.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe beyond school and their experiences are broadened through an impressive range of trips. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about their links with a school in Germany and their recent overseas visit which had clearly had a very positive impact on developing their confidence and maturity.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school and this leads to extremely good attitudes to learning and sensitively caring for each other. This was reflected in conversations with pupils and their families, and from views expressed on Parent View.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying is not an issue at Dearham, although they do learn about different forms of bullying. In one lesson, with the resident computer specialist, Year 4 pupils were learning how to 'blog' using the school's secure website. They were also developing a strong understanding of the dangers of making friends through social networks and the potential impact of cyber-bullying.
- The curriculum allows pupils to develop their knowledge of business and enterprise skills to raise funds for school and for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed extremely well through their experience at school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body are relentless in their drive to continually improve the school. There have been many recent changes and improvements. This includes more effective checks on the quality of teaching. Staff are not content with teaching which is less than good. This is a key factor in why the quality of teaching has improved and is now outstanding overall.
- Using information from lesson observations along with information about how quickly pupils are learning, the headteacher ensures that appropriate staff training is in place. Staff who are new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, settle very quickly and are supported extremely well through training opportunities both within the school and beyond. Staff are set challenging targets which are checked and linked directly to pay awards.
- The commitment and dedication of all staff to provide a high standard of education for pupils, whilst nurturing their personal growth in a safe and secure school is commendable. Dearham is at the heart of the community and is why there is an increasing number of parents who send their children to this school which is close to exceeding capacity.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance have led to many improvements since the headteacher took up her post. For example, senior staff and subject leaders now regularly work with class teachers, teaching assistants and the learning mentor to decide on appropriate support for individual pupils whose learning could speed up even further. This has led to rapid improvement in progress for every individual pupil.

- The curriculum provides a wide range of learning activities and the pupils particularly enjoy their topic work, music, sport and opportunities to learn French and German. The breakfast- and after-school clubs are very well attended and enjoyed by all groups of pupils.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very committed to seeing the school improve. The governors ensure that the school fulfils academy regulations; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. Governors challenge staff on how well pupils are learning and the quality of teaching. The governors now play a more central role in shaping the long-term plans for the school based on how well pupils are progressing compared to other schools. The governing body has also agreed the use of pupil premium funding to appoint a learning mentor and additional teaching assistants to provide one-to-one help and small group work to ensure that all pupils make the same progress.
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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	137602
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	403708

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Jenkinson
Headteacher	Samantha Kidd
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01900 812518
Fax number	01900 812518
Email address	admin@dearham.cumbria.sch.uk

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