

# Silloth Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112235
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	378447
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sue Sharkey

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sharon Weightman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Ingrams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Liddel Street Silloth Wigton CA7 4DR
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Sue Sharkey

Additional inspector

John Ellwood

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons observing eight teachers. Discussions were held with the headteacher, school staff, groups of pupils, representatives of the local authority and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed pupils' work and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's system for tracking pupil progress. Inspectors scrutinised documents regarding the safeguarding of pupils and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 78 parents and carers, 25 school staff and 87 pupils were also taken into account. No responses were available from the online questionnaire to parents (Parent View).

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average. In 2011 the school met the current government floor standard for primary school, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

There has been a considerable amount of instability since the previous inspection due to long-term absence and changes in staffing and leadership. The school has had three temporary headteachers since 2009. A permanent headteacher was appointed in January 2012. The school has Healthy School status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management and to the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well nurtured and cared for in a safe environment and make good progress. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory and at the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is broadly average. Changes in leadership and staffing over the last few years have had a negative effect resulting in a fall in attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Good teaching was observed during the inspection but this good practice is not consistent across the school. Recent improvements are helping pupils to enjoy their learning more. More stable staffing and the work of school leaders, supported by the local authority, are having a positive impact and as a result, the rate of pupils' progress is beginning to improve. Marking and feedback to pupils about their work is up-to-date but it is not sharp enough for all pupils to understand precisely how to improve their work further.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. A calm atmosphere pervades the school. Attendance is rising and is now broadly average.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Although the mathematics curriculum supports pupils' learning satisfactorily, the English curriculum does not. The range of pupils' work, particularly in writing, is often too narrow because pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply and develop their literacy skills across different areas of the curriculum. The previous acting headteacher galvanised the staff to initiate improvements. The new headteacher has continued to implement effective procedures to evaluate the school and has strengthened the quality of teaching. However, these

improvements are very recent and it is too soon to see their impact on outcomes for pupils.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in English by:
  - making sure the English curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
  - providing greater opportunities for pupils to learn independently and to apply and develop their literacy skills across the curriculum
  - improving the quality of marking and feedback in order to help pupils to know the next steps in their learning.
  
- Strengthen the school's capacity to secure and sustain improvements by:
  - increasing the effectiveness of leaders, particularly middle leaders, in robustly monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum so they can intervene to make improvements
  - ensuring that good practice in teaching is shared in order to make the quality of teaching consistently good or better.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children in the Nursery and Reception Years make good progress, especially given that many start the school with communication, language, writing and calculation skills which are lower than those typical for children of this age. Lesson observations show that children develop good attitudes to learning and, they develop their language and vocabulary successfully because adults talk constantly with them. The Nursery and Reception classes provide a good range of exciting and imaginative activities which children enjoy and respond to well. By the time they start in Year 1, pupils' overall attainment broadly matches expectations nationally although their calculation and writing skills remain relatively weak.

Across Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress so that attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in English has declined gradually in recent years; in contrast, attainment in mathematics shows improvement. Pupils' progress in English has slowed but has remained broadly satisfactory from their starting points. School leaders have recently put in place a number of strategies particularly to improve pupils' progress in reading and writing. Recent assessments indicate that these actions are proving to be successful, indicating that progress is improving. Pupils say they enjoy the daily phonics sessions (letters and the sounds), which have been recently introduced. These take place for all year groups at the start of each day with pupils from across the school working together in groups of similar ability. Other strategies have been introduced in order to ensure that boys and girls are stimulated and motivated to read and write. Boys' reading and writing skills, particularly at Key Stage 1, have been relatively weak compared to girls, but the gap is now beginning to close.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children find reading to be fun and enjoy developing their reading skills. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly

average in reading and writing. Most pupils are able to use their skills to break down and sound out new words, but there are occasions when pupils can read too quickly and miss out words or mispronounce them. Pupils in Key Stage 2 begin to become confident readers and benefit from the extended range of books available to them. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because activities planned for them are well matched to their individual needs. Similarly pupils known to be eligible for free school meals progress as well as their peers. Those parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, feel that their children are currently making good progress. There was evidence of a minority of pupils making good progress during the inspection, but overall progress for the large majority of pupils is satisfactory.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching has fluctuated, particularly in Key Stage 2, due to changes in staffing in the last few years. This has now been addressed so that staffing is more settled. A positive feature of lessons is the very good relationships which staff have with pupils, this ensures that pupils are motivated and engaged. Teachers know pupils well and the good support from teaching assistants means that adults often work effectively with pupils in small groups. Good teaching is indicated by good pace, high expectations and lively discussions. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils had spirited discussions about different ways to convert fractions to decimals and percentages. In the final part of the lesson, pupils were engaged in a series of exercises and rhymes to help them remember simple conversion rules. In a few lessons too much time can be spent working as a whole class which results in pupils not having enough time to practise their writing skills.

When given the opportunity, shared working and discussion in groups gives pupils opportunities to interact with each other. This helps to develop their skills of working in a team by taking turns and listening to each other. This successfully promotes their social and moral development. However, teachers' planning does not allow enough opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning or provide enough opportunities for them to use and develop their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Regular tracking of pupils' progress is helping teachers to plan work which shows a better match to the needs of different pupils. Targets are set so that pupils know what they are aiming for. The setting of more challenging targets is promoting higher expectations amongst staff and pupils.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. The school provides a welcoming and happy environment in which pupils say they feel safe. Pupils are friendly towards each other and activities, including those enjoyed in outside areas, are orderly and well organised. Pupils speak well of their school but are aware that not all pupils have behaved well in the past. However, as this situation has now improved a sense of calm has been brought to the school. Parents and carers and pupils say that behaviour has improved, but a few parents and carers are still concerned about some disruptions in lessons.

Attendance is improving and is broadly average overall, although during the autumn term 2011 attendance was higher than average. Most pupils say they enjoy attending school. They talk positively about it and shared their enthusiasm with inspectors. Pupils say they like coming to school because they are cared for and feel safe. The caring ethos of the school is evident in interactions between staff and pupils. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to recognize how they can keep themselves safe. They understand safe practices and welcome visitors, for example, from the police who take part in lessons to reinforce safety guidelines. Pupils, and a few parents and carers, referred to bullying that has occurred. Pupils express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any bullying when it arises. The curriculum successfully promotes pupil's understanding of the impact of bullying and provides them with guidance about what they should do if they or other pupils are affected by it. Pupils are proud of the school council who are nominated annually to help improve the school. For example, their ideas have led to the introduction of play leaders at break time to help younger children engage productively in a range of fun activities

### **Leadership and management**

The monitoring of pupils' progress in recent years has not been robust enough to halt the decline in attainment in English. The roles and responsibilities of school leaders, including governors, in monitoring the quality of teaching and the curriculum, have proved to be ineffective. There has been insufficient capacity to tackle the school's weaknesses and drive improvement. New initiatives have been put in place and much effort is being exerted to introduce new ways of working. While actions show promise, it is too early to see the impact these are having on pupil outcomes.

Within the curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to take part in after-school activities, for example in dance, cookery and rugby sessions, offering them the chance to add to their skills and interests. An integral part of the curriculum is the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy participating in a range of different activities such as their engagement in Chinese New Year and Diwali celebrations. However, their understanding of the different cultures within modern British society is much less developed. Pupils are able to participate in a variety of social settings and their positive behaviour shows they are able to take responsibility for their own actions.

The school and governors have good links with parents and carers who appreciate the care that the school provides for their children. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and gives no cause for concern. Provision to secure equal opportunities for pupils is satisfactory and the school has effective systems in place to tackle any form of discrimination.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Silloth Primary School, Wigton, CA7 4DR**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when your school was inspected recently. We enjoyed talking with you and watching you learn in lessons as well as listening to you read. It was good to hear many of you working out how to read new words. Your behaviour is satisfactory overall, but we could see how many of you are now behaving well. We found that although many of you make improving progress in mathematics, over the last three years your progress in English has not been as successful because of weaknesses in the way you have been taught. Because of these weaknesses we have judged your school's overall effectiveness to be inadequate and that it requires a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit the school again to check that things are getting better. Unfortunately, you have had many changes in teachers and headteachers recently but now your school is more settled and everyone can concentrate on helping it improve. There are some things that we have asked the governors and staff to do to help the school to improve.

- To make sure that the school's curriculum in English helps all of you as much as possible to improve your reading and writing.
- Ensure that teachers provide you with different opportunities to practise your reading and writing skills in other subjects.
- To help teachers to plan opportunities in lessons for you to work more on your own and with others.
- To ensure that teachers mark your work so that you always know how to improve it.
- To make sure that all your lessons are of good quality.

Your headteacher, staff and the governing body are always trying to make the school better for you. They support you in all the work you do including helping you to attend school so you can enjoy being with your friends and learning new things every day. Thank you for completing the questionnaire and sharing your thoughts with us. Remember always do your best and help your teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Sharkey  
Lead Inspector

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