

Arlecdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112151
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357053
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ged Toman
Headteacher	Mr Philip Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Parts of nine lessons were observed and three teachers and a principal higher-level teaching assistant were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and documentation looked at included the self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' progress and documents relevant to safeguarding and child protection. Questionnaires from pupils, staff and 49 parents and carers were received and scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at number of key areas.

- The consistency of the progress and achievement of pupils across year groups, especially for boys, and in writing.
- Whether the teaching, learning and assessment across the school are consistently effective in challenging more-able pupils and improving writing.
- How effectively the curriculum is planned to support progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Whether school improvement planning provides a clear focus on improving weaker areas identified within pupils' achievement.
- Whether the governing body is fully complying with statutory requirements in the light of the gaps in the self-evaluation form.
- The effectiveness of the recently-established Early Years Foundation Stage unit.

Information about the school

Arlecdon is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well below the national average. The school gained the Sportsmark and Healthy School awards.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Arlecdon provides a satisfactory education. This small school, where staff know pupils and their families very well, provides good care and support within a supportive family atmosphere. Consequently, pupils are happy and feel secure; they behave well, are enthusiastic and ready to learn. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the work of the school and the school has highly-positive relationships with parents and carers. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Drawing on good partnerships with local services, additional support is well-targeted towards pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make good progress in their personal development, settling down well to most activities and enjoying learning. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially the sporting and outdoor activities that help them adopt good, healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. They take their responsibilities seriously. Older pupils enjoy their roles as play leaders, encouraging younger pupils to be active at break and lunchtimes. Pupils contribute their views sensibly to school improvement planning.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage in response to good provision that includes carefully-planned learning and play activities which meet their needs well. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching and pupils' learning are satisfactory. They are not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make better than satisfactory progress. There is some inconsistency in the progress pupils make from year to year as they move through the school. Attainment by Year 6 is average overall, but not as strong in mathematics and boys' writing as it is in reading.

The school's satisfactory capacity to improve is demonstrated through the effectiveness of actions that have been taken to improve the curriculum and teaching and learning. These actions are beginning to have an impact on raising attainment and accelerating progress, particularly in writing and particularly for boys. Leaders, managers, staff and the governing body work well as a team and are focused on common aims. The school's self-evaluation only identifies some relatively weaker areas of pupils' achievement because systems to track pupils' progress are not analysed closely enough. Leaders, managers and the governing body fulfil their statutory duties with one exception: staffing in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit does not comply with the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress further especially in writing and mathematics by:
 - increasing the numbers of pupils reaching above national average levels in writing and mathematics across year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2
 - checking for and promoting greater consistency in pupils' progress from year to year.
- Increase the proportion of teaching and learning that is at least good by:
 - ensuring that tasks fully challenge more-able pupils in all writing and mathematics lessons
 - improving the clarity of explanations to pupils in mathematics lessons
 - ensuring that tasks are always relevant to the main learning planned especially in problem-solving activities in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - analysing information on pupils' performance more rigorously so that leaders and managers and class teachers have an overview of how well pupils are performing in relation to national expectations for attainment and progress
 - using assessment information to hold staff more closely to account for pupils' progress
 - refining the school improvement plan further so that the actions planned reflect more closely the priorities for pupils' achievement
- Ensure that staffing in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit complies with the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, pupils settle down well to tasks and are eager to do well. They apply themselves with diligence and enthusiasm to most tasks. They enjoy working in pairs and groups and on most occasions work cooperatively to fulfil tasks successfully. Most pupils try hard to present their work carefully and they respond well to encouragement to produce well-formed handwriting and accurate spelling.

When they start in the Nursery and Reception years, most children have skills and levels of development in line with those expected for their age. Progress and provision have improved in recent years and children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception to reach the expected levels of development in most areas of learning. By the start of Year 1 most have better than average skills in literacy and numeracy. In Key Stages 1 and 2, most pupils make progress in line with national expectations overall although the school's data show that there are variations in the rate of progress from year to year. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has dipped in recent years. However, evidence in the work of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 shows that attainment is starting to rise and progress accelerate in response to a curriculum focused on exciting stories, more opportunities for talk and drama and close attention to supporting early reading and writing. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average and progress is satisfactory with reading stronger

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than writing and mathematics. Most pupils reach national average levels in both English and mathematics but no more than an average proportion achieves the higher levels. Inspection evidence shows that the progress of Key Stage 2 pupils is beginning to accelerate in writing in response to improvements to the curriculum and teaching and that the gap between boys and girls is beginning to close. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers. Well-targeted support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside specialists meets their needs and supports their good personal development and satisfactory academic progress.

Pupils say that there are very few incidents of bullying and that they are usually sorted out by adults. The school council has contributed well to improvements both in school and the local area through participation in a variety of local groups. Pupils learn to cooperate well in groups and take on responsibilities. The oldest pupils are ready and prepared to move to the next school. Pupils are applying their secure basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) satisfactorily in activities across the curriculum.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

No inadequate lessons were observed and there is a broadly equal balance between satisfactory and good teaching. Pupils say they enjoy lessons. Classes are well-managed and lessons are purposeful, with clear objectives. They are well-structured and include

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activities that interest pupils. Teaching assistants are suitably briefed and supportive of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where teaching and learning fall short of being good more-able pupils are not always fully challenged; teachers' initial explanations in mathematics lessons are not helpful in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding; and, in problem-solving activities, tasks are not always relevant to the main learning that is planned.

Regular assessment informs teachers' planning so that pupils make at least satisfactory progress and build on prior learning in most lessons. Teachers' marking of pupils' work usually provides clear guidance on how to improve, but not all work is marked regularly enough. Pupils benefit from having individual targets to guide their improvement in writing.

Curriculum planning ensures at least satisfactory progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Additional activities promote reading well. Work has started on planning activities around central themes, such as graffiti in Year 5 and 6, helping to stimulate interest and enthusiasm. Flexible arrangements enable pupils from different classes to be taught in groups to match their abilities in English and mathematics. Pupils enjoy the good provision of extra-curricular clubs that promote their personal development well. Visits and visitors stimulate interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment. However, full advantage is not always taken of these occasions to promote learning across the curriculum.

The school is a welcoming environment and staff know the pupils well. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and supportive. Pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are well-supported through effective partnerships with local services and the support provided within the school. Good attendance has been maintained and pupil absence is followed up swiftly. Pupils benefit from the daily breakfast and after-school care. The systems used to track individual progress help to identify and tackle potential underachievement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection leaders, managers and the governing body have successfully improved provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, increased resources for ICT, introduced systems to assess and track pupils' progress and maintained good attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance is focused on individual pupil progress. However, information is not always analysed rigorously enough to give leaders and

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managers an overview of how well pupils are performing in relation to the school's challenging targets and national expectations. Inconsistencies in progress from year to year are not always identified quickly enough and the information is not used rigorously enough to hold teachers fully to account for the progress of pupils. Improvement planning sets out the right priorities. However, it does not identify precisely the weaker areas in pupils' achievement. Similarly, it does not detail the specific actions needed to bring about required improvements, for example, to ensure consistent progress throughout the school or to increase the number of pupils reaching above average levels. Nevertheless, underperformance in writing, especially among boys, has been recognised and is being tackled successfully. Relevant professional development has been well-focused on raising attainment in writing often in good partnership with other local schools.

The governing body has a range of useful expertise and is supportive of the school's work. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory requirements with the exception of the staffing arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. With a number of new members, the governing body is aware of the need to improve the rigour of its monitoring and evaluating of the impact of the school improvement plan and to reviewing school policies. Work has commenced in these areas.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. It is a welcoming and inclusive school which focuses well on individual pupils. Through improved monitoring of pupils' performance, the school has recognised and is reducing gaps in performance between girls and boys in writing. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements. Staff have been trained and risk assessments are in place. The school is a settled and cohesive community. Pupils work extensively with different groups within the local community and through curriculum activities are aware of - and increasingly communicate with - people from countries around the world such as France and Morocco. Less action has been taken to develop pupils' awareness of the diversity of society within the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and settled and follow routines well. Most children reach at least the levels of development expected for their age by the end of Reception. Children work well with each other sharing equipment and playing happily alongside each other. Children are excited and stimulated by the activities planned. Within the theme of castles, they enjoyed hunting for treasure. In an adult-led activity they were challenged to use the 'golden coins' to develop numeracy skills. There is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by adults. Activities are provided outdoors in all areas of learning but these do not always focus closely enough on the learning that has been planned. Staff work together well as a team to plan and assess activities. Good systems of assessment help adults to build on children's different rates of development so that more-able children are challenged. Around two thirds of the Reception children work alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils in the mornings supporting their good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. Parents and carers are well-informed of their children's progress. Children are kept safe and welfare requirements are in place with the exception of staffing. It does not comply with the legal requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework because a teacher is not present with the majority of the children for most of their time in school. Leaders and managers know what the priorities for improvement are but have not formalised planning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A good proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Most comments are positive and supportive. They praised the approachability of staff and the care and support the school provides. They recognise improvements which are being made, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors' findings support these views. A very few parents and carers have concerns that incidents of bullying are not always dealt with effectively enough and that behaviour is not well managed. Inspectors found that behaviour was good and that pupils are well-informed of how to deal with bullying and that the rare incidents are usually dealt with effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Arlecdon Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	53	23	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	59	20	41	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	39	28	57	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	39	29	59	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	45	27	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	45	26	53	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	47	24	49	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	35	27	55	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	49	25	51	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	37	24	49	6	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	47	22	45	1	2	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	19	39	30	61	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	45	25	51	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arlecdon Primary School, Frizington, CA26 3XA

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleague to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work, behaving well and enjoying school activities.

Your school provides a satisfactory education. It was good to hear that you feel safe and secure in school and enjoy lessons. You are keen to adopt a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the many activities the school provides to encourage you to do so. You play your part well in helping to improve school life and take on responsibilities seriously. You are keen to come to school and attendance is above average. You settle down to work well and make steady progress. Children in Nursery and Reception Years make especially good progress because they enjoy and are encouraged to make the most of the many activities and resources in their area of the school. By the time you leave attainment is average and your school recognises the need to help more of you to reach even higher levels of attainment, especially in writing and mathematics. The leaders, managers, staff and the governing body work well as a team to help make your school a better place for you. In order to help you to achieve even better than you are now, we have asked them to make further improvements. These include:

- ensuring that all lessons are at least good and include clear explanations and challenging relevant tasks for everyone, including the most able of you
- looking more carefully at how well you are making progress to make sure that no classes or groups fall behind the challenging targets set for them
- making sure that the legal requirements for staffing are met for the Early Years Foundation Stage unit.

You can all help by continuing to enjoy school and making the most of all the opportunities it gives you to achieve in your academic work and in the way you develop as a person.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead Inspector

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