

Coniston CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112279
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	366248
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	John Gornall HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Mark East
Headteacher	Miss Zena Lines
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2010
School address	Shepherd's Bridge Coniston Cumbria LA21 8AL
Telephone number	01539 441302
Fax number	01539 441302
Email address	head@coniston.cumbria.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Inspection number	366248

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

When Coniston C of E Primary was inspected in April 2010 it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on two occasions. At the last monitoring inspection the school was judged to be making good progress.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector observed ten lessons taught by four teachers and one sports instructor. He held meetings with the acting headteacher and senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. The inspector talked to staff, parents and carers and pupils and observed the school's work. He looked at pupils' records, including their attendance and progress data. The inspector scrutinised documentation, including the self-review submitted by the school's leaders, the assessment system employed by the school and minutes of governing body meetings.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of teaching to see whether pupils are making sufficient progress.
- The ethos of the school and the morale of pupils.
- The effectiveness of care, guidance and support to meet the needs of all pupils.
- How effectively leadership and management quality assures the work of the school and drives improvement.

Information about the school

Coniston C of E Primary is a small rural primary school that has undergone significant change since its last inspection. Shortly after the inspection in April 2010, the previous headteacher left the school and, through the support of the local authority, a new acting headteacher was appointed. A review of all of the school's policies and procedures took place and classes were reorganised at the end of the summer term 2010. There are now four small mixed-age classes operating in the morning including a joint Nursery Year and Reception Year class. In the afternoon there is one Key Stage 1 class that includes Reception Year pupils, and one Key Stage 2 class. The acting headteacher has been responsible for teaching Years 5 and 6 in the mornings. The local authority provided support for the school at the early stages but as the school established itself under the leadership of the new acting headteacher, the level of support has appropriately reduced. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed and begins her duties in September 2011.

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

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Coniston C of E Primary is now providing its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education; pupils behave well and enjoy lessons, morale has improved and staff are working as one to take the school forward.

This is a rapidly improving and happy school. The acting headteacher, having taken charge of the school shortly after its last inspection, has been highly effective in working with staff, pupils, parents, carers and external partners to ensure the school is not only a much happier place but also an environment conducive to learning. There has been a resulting swing in the school's culture from one of passive learning, low morale and having to deal with behavioural issues to one of carefully planned teaching with a focus on accelerating learning, a much happier environment and good behaviour.

Attainment across the school is rising in response to raised expectations of pupils' capabilities. Targeted support programmes and a high level of individual help in classrooms are encouraging pupils to catch up where necessary and this is boosting their confidence. The pupils are keen to do well and while the pace of learning has accelerated and standards are beginning to rise, there is much untapped potential in this school. Although pupil numbers are low, the school's own assessments indicate this year's end of key stage results will be higher than those of the previous year, and inspection evidence supports this view.

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment are much improved and at least satisfactory. They are making better progress because the quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now good overall, with the result that lessons are purposeful and more interesting. The pupils report that they are expected to work harder in lessons and complete regular homework that is promptly marked. The vast majority of pupils are very keen to learn and their books over the past twelve months show considerable improvement in work rate and presentation. The progress pupils make has improved significantly at Key Stage 2, and is now good overall in this key stage. Lessons are lively with far more interaction between adults and learners than that described at the time of the previous inspection. That said, there is a heavy dependence on teacher input in most lessons that consist mainly of an introduction to short tasks that are completed through a rather narrow range of learning styles. As a consequence, opportunities for the pupils to develop their independence as learners, for example, through small research activities, open ended investigations or working collaboratively in small groups, are sometimes rather limited.

This small village school has a tangible feeling of friendly togetherness, an ethos that was largely missing at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are working closely together and supporting each other and the pupils want to do well. The behaviour and the attitudes

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

of the pupils have improved and are now good. As one Key Stage 2 pupil stated 'we work harder now but it's more fun and interesting'. Break and lunchtimes are a delight and pupils enjoy the benefit of the picturesque school grounds. The curriculum is good and the school works hard to seek opportunities to broaden the pupils' experiences.

The provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved but not quite at the same pace as elsewhere in the school. The children enter school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age and make steady progress. Teaching is mainly satisfactory and occasionally good. The staff provide high levels of care for the children and relations are strong. At times, however, the balance is too uneven between the learning activities that the children can choose for themselves through play and the structured activities set up by staff to encourage specific learning outcomes.

There have been improvements to how the school assesses and records pupils' needs and then tracks and evaluates their progress. Regular assessments take place in all of the main subject areas and the pupils' progress is carefully monitored and tracked. All of the pupils have specific learning targets which are pasted into their books and when talking with the inspector they were able to explain these including what they felt they needed to do next to achieve their targets.

The acting headteacher's and senior staff's strategic planning for improvement, helped and supported by the local authority and the governing body, has been first rate. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and this has enabled the school to tackle the right priorities. This has resulted in much improved provision and stronger outcomes for the pupils. Leaders have demonstrated a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards across the school by:
 - - building on the recent successful initiatives to improve teaching and learning
 - - developing further the pupils' knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy, particularly their confidence in all aspects of writing.
 - - ensuring that outcomes from assessments are consistently shared with the pupils and are increasingly used to inform next steps in teachers' planning.
- Encourage the pupils to become more independent as learners by:
 - - broadening the range of learning styles they experience in lessons
 - - providing more open-ended tasks and research-type activities in lessons and for homework
 - - exploring how computer technology can be harnessed to support the pupils' independence as learners.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - - developing the teaching so that it is consistently good or better

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

- - ensuring the balance is right between the adult-directed activities, the specific independent or group tasks that are set and those experiences the children are encouraged to choose for themselves
- - reviewing the provision for the Reception-aged children to ensure it is commensurate with their abilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The pupils reach broadly average attainment by the time they leave school. Performance is stronger at Key Stage 1 where attainment is above average and this has been an established trend over recent years. It is only recently, however, that this positive Key Stage 1 picture has been built upon successfully at Key Stage 2. This is because more is now being expected of the older pupils and they are beginning to experience the higher levels of work of which most of them are capable. As a consequence, the declining trend in standards reported at Key Stage 2 at the last inspection has been arrested and through good and better teaching the pupils' attainment is rising. Add to this emerging profile the improvements in pupils' behaviour and their attitudes, their general relationships with adults, the curriculum and assessment, and it is evident that pupils' progress is accelerating.

The progress that pupils make in lessons is now good. Pupils are more actively involved in lessons and the pace of work is lively and stimulating. The pupils' books show a good rate of work with increasing attention paid to correcting mistakes and finishing tasks. Because of the legacy of some underachievement in the past, the pupils' knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy, although improving, are not as secure as they should be. The school has rightly prioritised pupils' writing as an area for development and this is evident in the pupils' books and in improved displays around the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities fare as well as other pupils because the school is acutely aware of who they are and because personalised learning is a growing strength of the school's work.

Pupils are justified in saying they feel safe at the school and their parents and carers agree. Pupils have staff they can turn to if they have concerns and every younger pupil has a named older pupil who supports and looks out for them at break and lunchtimes.

Lessons run smoothly, assemblies are delightful and the school is a calm and orderly community. Pupils understand right from wrong and appreciate when someone has not had a fair deal. Encouragingly, they are working increasingly cooperatively and are tolerant of each other's differences. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and this is recently reflected in the award of Healthy School status. Pupils recognise they are part of a small community and are enabled to make a contribution through a variety of social and educational experiences involving local adults, the church and the neighbouring high school. Increasingly opportunities are being taken to reach out to the local and wider community through fund-raising events and community involvement at the school. The pupils' attendance is above average.

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

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?

The quality of teaching is stronger than it was twelve months ago. Although there are minor inconsistencies to iron out, the pupils benefit from good teaching in most lessons and there are many positive aspects to share. Teachers and support assistants form effective teams and lessons start promptly. Relationships are very good. Detailed planning for lessons ensures a structured approach with objectives for learning shared and reviewed. The acting headteacher, in teaching Years 5 and 6 every morning, has provided staff with an excellent role model. The teachers regularly give praise, encourage participation, ask probing questions and give clear demonstrations where necessary. They use a range of methods to retain pupils' interest, including good use of information and communication technology to make lessons relevant. For example, in a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson when learning about characters in a fairy tale, the pupils first acted out different characters then the teacher transferred their learning to the information and communication technology (ICT) suite to develop their ideas further. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to foster independent learning among the pupils, which results in over dependency on adults in the room. Similarly, there are times when computers sit unused when they could be utilized to support independent learning. Marking is much improved, including the use of helpful comments by the teacher to enable pupils to understand the next steps in their learning. Similarly, the half-termly reviews of pupils' progress give a clear indication of where action is needed to support those who are not making the progress expected or where targets need to be refreshed.

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

The school is acutely aware that it is located in quite an isolated part of the country and it has taken positive steps to provide a good range of additional curricular and other stimuli to broaden the pupils' experiences. For example, a specialist teacher from the local high school teaches French to Key Stage 2 pupils and visiting instructors provide coaching skills in sports such as rugby. In addition, there are many clubs that the pupils can attend at lunchtime and after school, as one pupil commented 'there is lots to choose from to keep us busy.' The older pupils recently took part in a residential visit to the city of Manchester. For some of the pupils this visit was the first experience of city life.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The management of this important aspect of school life is stronger than before, including the arrangements for safeguarding. Information gathering and assessment data about individual pupils has been consolidated and made readily available to all staff. The special educational needs register has been regularly reviewed and updated.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher, with the help of senior staff, the local authority and the governing body, has acted positively and worked hard to successfully remove the inadequacies identified at the last inspection. The right priorities for improvement have been identified and pursued with rigour. As a result, confidence and expectations are growing and the school has become increasingly self-sufficient in identifying how well it is doing and where further improvement is needed. The governing body has become more proactive in holding the school's leadership to account so that any changes made are understood and supported. The promotion of equality and diversity is good across all aspects of the school's work: staff ensure that activities, such as after-school clubs and sport programmes are open to all. The school is well aware of its village context and has promoted community cohesion through various partnerships focused on building the self-esteem of pupils and raising the profile of the school. The school recognises that there is more work to do to further raise its profile locally and regionally. The arrangements for keeping pupils safe have improved with all requirements now in place and regularly reviewed. The school building is safe and the systems for recognising potential hazards and risks are embedded in the staff's practices.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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 make a satisfactory start in the Nursery and Reception classes. The children make satisfactory progress overall but in speaking and listening they make good progress. This is because of the high level of interaction with teaching and support staff. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory but sometimes good. Occasionally, there is insufficient balance between those activities the children are allowed to choose for themselves and the adult led and other directed activities. At times the outdoor play dominates and it is not always clear what the specific intended learning outcomes are when this happens. The issue is particularly noticeable for Reception-aged children who, as the year progresses, need to have greater structure and challenge in their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage classroom has been improved during the past twelve months including more vibrant and creative displays, clearer labelling and better partitioning of key areas of learning. There is a high level of care for the children and all staff know them well. The Reception-aged children join the Key Stage 1 class in the afternoon and their progress accelerates because learning is more structured.

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	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	3

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

Stage	
-------	--

Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers who responded to the school's questionnaire provided an extremely positive view of all aspects of provision. One parent wrote, 'the school gives me lot of support and understanding' and this view typifies the views of others. A very small number of parents and carers felt that the school did not manage unacceptable behaviour well. The inspector took particular note of this view in observing behaviour during lessons and around the site and in examining the school's records. He found behaviour to be good and its management to be highly effective. A parent commented positively that 'the information we receive as parents has improved and my child seems happier and enjoys coming to school'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coniston CofE 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 inspector received 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	72	5	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	67	6	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	56	8	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	72	5	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	56	8	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	50	9	50	0	0	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)	8	44	10	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	56	8	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	39	7	39	4	22	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	50	8	44	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	44	10	56	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	56	8	44	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Coniston CofE Primary School, Shepherd's Bridge, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8AL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work. Over the past year, I have visited your school on three occasions and it has always been an enjoyable experience.

I am very pleased to tell you that I judged your school to have made good improvement since its last full inspection. It no longer requires special measures. Congratulations on playing your part.

I was very impressed with the improved progress you are now making in lessons. You told me that you are working harder but having more fun. You showed real enthusiasm when you were describing your visits to the homes of famous writers and artists as well as the older pupil's residential trip to Manchester. My favourite though was your own special marriage ceremony that was almost as exciting as the royal wedding itself! Your behaviour has improved because you are much happier and your learning is more fun. It is great to see that your parents and carers have noticed the difference too.

Your teachers and helpers, who have been extremely well led by Ms Lines, have worked extremely hard to bring about changes. They care deeply about you and have worked with you to make the school feel like a strong community where achievement and enjoyment really matter.

It is important that your school continues to improve when your new headteacher arrives in September. I have asked that teaching is further improved to ensure standards rise even further and that you have more opportunities to work independently and to take part in lots of practical activities and investigations. The children in the joint Nursery and Reception class do well but with some slight improvements they could do even better. I know that you will rise to new challenges and make ensure that Coniston C of E Primary School goes from strength to strength.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Gornall HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.