

Gilsland CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112418
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357101
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Murray
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Boucetta
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Six lessons and three teachers were observed. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and partners of the school. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work and a range of documentation was scrutinised, including the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school improvement planning, risk assessments and other documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 21 parents and carers were analysed and considered.

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

- How effective is the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils?
- How effective is the school's contribution to community cohesion in terms of pupils' understanding of equality and diversity?
- How effective are school leaders and managers in driving and sustaining improvement in pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. In some year groups this is as high as 100 per cent. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also high. Currently, all pupils in the school are of White British heritage. Pupil mobility is high; for example, four of the 11 pupils in Years 3-6 have joined the school during Key Stage 2. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, Activemark and Sportsmark.

A privately run Nursery shares the school site. That provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Pupils' achievement is outstanding as a result of outstanding provision and the vibrant and warm environment created for their learning. Staff nurture successfully an ethos of self-esteem and respect for others, which is central to the school's harmonious learning community. At the heart of the school's work are outstanding levels of care and support and a very creative, stimulating curriculum, which is supported by outstanding partnerships and engagement with parents and carers. The school's work in safeguarding pupils is excellent. Consequently, pupils feel very safe, know how to adopt healthy lifestyles, behave impeccably and have outstanding attitudes to school. Pupils have developed a deep understanding of how they can contribute to cohesion within their school, the local community and the wider world. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Throughout the school teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start due to outstanding practices in planning, in which children play an active part. Throughout the school teaching and support staff work together exceptionally well. In targeted areas, such as writing, pupils make outstanding progress. Teachers provide pupils with a real purpose for their work and every opportunity is taken to put the knowledge and skills gained into action. Although good, progress in mathematics is not yet as rapid. The school has identified that older pupils do not always use their basic skills, for example place value, well enough in new learning. Teachers are beginning to use the lessons learned from the improved provision for writing to increase the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics. High mobility and very small pupil numbers make comparisons with national averages difficult; however, inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is generally above average and overall progress is outstanding. A strength of the school is how well pupils, whenever they arrive, are integrated into the school family. They rapidly gain in self-confidence and make very fast progress because teachers use assessment of pupils' individual abilities exceptionally well to ensure they are provided with a curriculum, which is tailored specifically to their individual needs. As one recently admitted pupil commented, 'I feel like I have been here for years'. The school is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities for success. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make outstanding progress.

Under the exceptional leadership of the headteacher all staff have developed a shared philosophy and desire to provide each pupil with the best possible chance to succeed. As a result of rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, improvement strategies have been highly effective in bringing about rapid improvement in every aspect of the school's work. This demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics from good to outstanding by:
 - building on the very effective practice developed in the teaching of writing, for example, further involving pupils in the moderation of their own work
 - continuing to increase the opportunities to problem-solve and use their mathematical skills when learning through topics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and their achievement is outstanding. Children generally enter the Reception class with levels of attainment below those expected overall, although attainment in their personal, social and emotional development is increasingly higher. Throughout the school all pupils make at least good, and in some aspects of their learning outstanding, progress. They take great pride in their work and generally present it well. Pupils of all abilities have an excellent understanding of how to work independently. They respond exceptionally well to the opportunities provided to direct their own learning. They sensibly reflect whether or not they have met their objectives within lessons and, with support from staff, set targets for their next steps in order to progress as well as they can. This moderation of their own work is particularly effective in contributing to pupils' outstanding progress in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their various starting points. As a result, many of these pupils attain the expected level for their age by the time they leave the school in most aspects of their learning.

Pupils have a strong voice in the life of the school and develop skills which prepare them exceptionally well for the future. They make very good use of information and communication technology to research, investigate and present their ideas and relish the opportunities provided to engage in enterprise activities, such as how they will generate a profit on 'funds day'. Pupils feel very safe and have a well-developed understanding of how to avoid unsafe situations. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and are keen to participate in sporting opportunities, for example, those available through the sports partnership. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their contribution to the school and local community is extremely good. They have a deep sense of fairness and an astute understanding of their own and others' place in the world. Pupils express themselves maturely and confidently when they talk about social and moral issues. They relish the opportunities to explore the natural world provided through the locality of their school and develop a deep understanding of their responsibility to sustain this beauty and its resources for others.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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 school's provision is very responsive to pupils' needs. Teaching is continually improving and enables pupils to achieve outstandingly well. Teachers' expectations of pupils are very high. They skilfully use questioning to assess each pupil's ability and to challenge pupils to think for themselves when solving problems. Teachers know pupils extremely well, not only their level of ability but also any barriers which may prevent effective learning. Teachers use this knowledge very effectively to plan work which is carefully targeted towards each pupil taking their next step in learning. Very occasionally, this is less effective when at the start of lessons pupils of all abilities are taught together.

Curriculum provision is exciting and innovative and it has undergone a significant transformation since the time of the previous inspection. The focus on enquiry-based learning provides pupils with memorable experiences. Through a system of 'plan, do and review' pupils are fully involved in planning topics. Pupils' involvement in planning ensures that they are able to follow their interests, develop their personal qualities and put their knowledge and skills into practice across a range of subjects. Topics such as 'up our street' have been used to great effect in promoting pupils' literacy skills. Opportunities for pupils to put their mathematical skills into practice are developing well but have not had an impact on pupils' progress.

All pupils, whatever their ability, receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Those who are most able are provided with the guidance needed to reach the levels of which

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they are capable. The school's exemplary care and support for pupils with emotional and social difficulties help them to manage their own behaviour effectively and participate in all that the curriculum offers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive exceptionally well-targeted support, which enables them to become confident learners who make outstanding progress. Very thorough transition arrangements are helpful for pupils when they are joining or leaving the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly successful leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a clear, shared vision for the school. This is based firmly on identified pupil and community needs, high expectations and an unstinting drive for continuous improvement. Morale amongst staff, pupils, governors, parents and carers is very high. The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well. Consequently, there is no evidence of discrimination and all pupils achieve well, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or ability. Learning partnerships with schools locally and beyond have made an outstanding contribution to the excellent curriculum opportunities from which pupils greatly benefit. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is used to great effect. This enables the vast majority of pupils to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them. The monitoring of the school's provision is thorough; clear points for further development ensure that the quality of teaching is outstanding. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory.

The governing body is well informed and fulfils its statutory duties. With the guidance of the headteacher, the governing body have extended their role in the monitoring of school provision and are beginning to use this information to hold the school to account more rigorously for its performance. Safeguarding arrangements are extremely robust and practice is of high quality. Procedures are constantly updated to reflect the school's detailed risk assessments which include input from pupils, parents and carers. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is outstanding. The school has an in-depth knowledge of the community which it serves. Partnerships have been developed which have effectively extended pupils' understanding of the differences and similarities between those in school, the local community and in the wider world. From this pupils have developed a deep understanding that it is the responsibility of each person to respect and respond to the needs of others.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding care and welfare, coupled with very good induction procedures and effective links with the privately run nursery which shares the school premises, ensure that children make an impressive start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children demonstrate excellent levels of enjoyment and independence because of the exceptionally good curriculum on offer and the high-quality teaching. The children develop important skills in language, numeracy, information and communication technology, and personal development as they cooperate with each other. Improvements since the previous inspection to the outdoor area provide children with exciting opportunities to investigate and to extend their learning. They enthusiastically use their imagination, supported by high-quality resources. This, together with very effective intervention by staff, contributes to children's outstanding progress. Early assessments through detailed observations identify effectively those children who are experiencing difficulty with their learning. Sensitive, well-targeted support ensures that children are helped to overcome these difficulties and to grow in self-confidence and belief in their ability to achieve. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Safeguarding is managed well and given a very high priority. The innovative approaches taken to meet the diverse needs of the children are very successful and prepare children very well for moving into Year 1.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most are wholly supportive of the school and its leadership and express no significant concerns. Of those who returned questionnaires, all indicated that their children enjoyed school and that they were happy with their children's overall experience. Those who expressed additional views were particularly positive about how well the school meets the individual needs of their children. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gilsland 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 23 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	67	7	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	71	6	29	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)	12	57	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	67	5	24	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	81	4	19	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.



2 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilsland CofE Primary School, Brampton, CA8 7AA

It was a pleasure to visit your school. Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave me during my visit. I really enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and visiting your lessons. You go to an outstanding school. You told me that you feel very safe and it was good to see how seriously you take your responsibility to look after each other. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is based on your respect for people as individuals, whatever their background, your enthusiasm for learning, your sense of right and wrong and your love of nature.

You thoroughly enjoy your lessons and do extremely well, especially in your writing. Your teachers make your learning very interesting and give you lots of things to make, do and find out about. They also take a great deal of care to make sure that you understand what you are learning and give you extra help if you need it. Your headteacher and all of the staff work very hard to make sure your school keeps on improving.

Even outstanding schools can continue to get better and to help with this I have asked the school to help you make even better progress in mathematics, for example, by continuing to provide you with lots of opportunities to practise your mathematical skills in your topic work.

I hope you all do well on 'funds day' and put your improving mathematics skills to good use.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead Inspector

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