

# Plumbland CofE School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112275
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	378453
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire McKie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Parsonby Aspatria Wigton CA7 2DQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed three teachers and eight lessons, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work and analysed 28 questionnaires from parents and carers, 24 from pupils and seven from staff. The inspector also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, information the school had collected about the pupils' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

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

- What current attainment and progress are, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 2, writing in Key Stage 1 and that of higher attaining pupils throughout the school.
- In lessons, how well teachers use assessment to help pupils improve their work and involve them in assessing their own learning.
- How effective all members of staff are at monitoring and evaluation to identify and address any underachievement.

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is lower than average. The school has many awards, including Healthy School status and Activemark for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Separate childcare provision shares the school site, but this is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Plumbland is a good school where care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Outcomes for pupils are good overall, with the extent to which pupils feel safe and their understanding of a healthy lifestyle being excellent. Pupils, staff, parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. These comments from parents and carers are typical of many, 'I have nothing but the greatest respect for the teachers and the school.' and 'The staff are to be congratulated on all they do.'

Since the previous inspection, many aspects of the school have improved, resulting in some significant gains in pupils' achievement and in many areas of personal development. These include the extent to which they feel safe and their skills in information and communication technology (ICT), which was highlighted as an area for development at the previous inspection. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 their attainment has risen to above average. This represents good progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit which are slightly below that expected for their age. Areas of relative underperformance, such as in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and writing in Key Stage 1 have been addressed, so that achievement is now good throughout the school and in all subject areas. Higher attaining pupils are stretched well enabling them to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the close, well-focused support they receive.

Pupils are welcoming and respect each other. They have very strong spiritual development, stemming from the school's close association with the church. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. Teaching is good and pupils know their targets and how to improve their work. Good behaviour, along with good attendance, plays a significant part in pupils' learning. However, in some lessons the pace of learning is not fast enough and pupils are not involved in independent learning tasks early enough. In addition, pupils are not always given clear guidance about how they can tell if they are learning well in each of their activities. As a result, although attainment is above average, it is not as high as it could be, nor is progress rising as fast.

In the two years that the headteacher has been in post, she has empowered and galvanised the staff into an effective team who support each other very well. The school's monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and it knows its strengths and areas

for development well. The school identifies any underachievement early because it tracks the progress of pupils regularly and accurately. Monitoring of teaching and learning has brought about clear improvements. However, there is not a close enough focus on learning, at present, when observing lessons. Nevertheless, the many improvements that have occurred, and the cohesiveness and enthusiasm of the staff, ensure that the capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- Raise attainment further and accelerate progress by:
  - increasing the pace of learning and getting pupils involved in independent learning as early as possible in lessons
  - giving clear guidance to pupils so they can always tell if they are learning well in each of their activities
  - ensuring that lesson observations always have a close focus on the learning that is taking place.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>2</b>
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Pupils behave well and they thoroughly enjoy their education. This was apparent throughout the inspection: in lessons, at break times and in assemblies. In a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson pupils were delighted at the prospect of the challenge of determining if the statement, 'All numbers can be made by adding together two consecutive numbers' was correct. In a Year 1 and Year 2 English lesson pupils were seen cooperating well with each other researching information on the internet about animals that live in cold places. This showed their strong ICT skills to good effect. Pupils' achievement is good. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities make good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils enter school with a wide variation in skills. The school's data shows that overall those skills are slightly below that expected in most areas. Their good progress means that they leave in Year 6 with attainment that is generally above the national average.

The school is a harmonious community and pupils are very respectful of each other and towards adults. They say that they feel extremely safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy and the school's involvement in the local authority's sporting partnership and the consortium of small schools enables them to participate in the wide range of sports. Sports leaders lead physical activities for the younger children. Pupils are proud of the many displays of their work and of the links they have with a school in Papua, New Guinea. They talk of the importance of helping others and willingly take the responsibility of jobs such as busy bees organising, amongst many things, and collecting pupils' evaluation of school assemblies. Along with their above average attendance, good ICT skills and above average literacy and numeracy skills, pupils are well prepared for their future. The pupils could not think of anything that they would want to change about their school, describing it as, 'A great school where everyone is kind to you.'

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support and its reputation as a 'family-like' school. Pupils are known well as individuals and any at risk of underachievement are identified early. Highly effective support helps pupils to catch up and to access their work. There are rigorous procedures to ensure attendance is above average, such as careful monitoring and following up individual absences. There are many enrichment activities and a wide range of clubs on offer. Pupils told us how much they enjoyed visits to the theatre in Keswick and the residential visit where they would get to climb Skiddaw. The curriculum is tailored well to the needs of different groups of pupils, with tasks adapted well for the more able and for the less able. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are being embedded within other subjects increasingly well and more and more subjects are being integrated into topics.

Relationships are very good and most lessons have a range of interesting activities. The effective use of interactive whiteboards enhances learning well and it was clear during the inspection that pupils love using them to demonstrate their work to the whole class. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning is not fast enough and pupils do not get involved in independent activities early enough. Teachers use good questioning techniques to challenge pupils and usually there are high expectations of pupils in lessons. Learning support assistants work well with teachers and provide good proactive support so that all pupils have full access to the good curriculum. Teachers usually discuss with pupils what it is they should be learning, but sometimes this is not specific enough. As a result it is sometimes difficult for the pupils to be able to say how well they are learning. Teachers' marking is usually thorough and helpful in making clear the next steps pupils need to take in their learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*


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

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads the school very effectively and responsibility is shared well amongst the teaching staff. All staff and members of the governing body are dedicated to enabling pupils to achieve their best both academically and personally and staff morale is particularly high. Comments from members of staff, such as, 'I am proud to be part of this happy family.' show just how much they enjoy and value working at the school. Self-evaluation is effective in helping to drive improvements, although when observing lessons the focus is not as much on the learning that is taking place as it should be. Currently, all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, reflecting good equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school's commitment to tackle discrimination. Members of the governing body are fully involved in the work of the school and know its strengths and what it needs to do to improve. They help shape the direction of the school and are increasingly evaluating their own effectiveness.

Safeguarding procedures are good, with clear policies and secure risk-assessment systems. Health and safety and child protection arrangements are very thorough. All members of staff have regular training in these matters and are well informed. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and value greatly the openness and approachability of the staff. The promotion of community cohesion within school, locally and internationally is particularly good, but links with other schools nationally of a different socio-economic or cultural makeup have not yet been fully established. There is a wide range of effective partnership involvement, including close links with a number of other local small schools. These help to give the children a wider range of social contacts, boosting their confidence when transferring to the much larger secondary schools. The school achieves good value for money.

### *These are the grades for the leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The good provision in Reception ensures that children get off to an excellent start in school. Children enter school with a wide range of skills and understanding that vary considerably from year-to-year due to the small numbers of children entering.

Overall their skills are slightly below those expected in many areas, but generally lower in communication, language and literacy. Excellent induction procedures with parents and carers and good links with the pre-school provision in school help the children to settle quickly and get a confident start to their school life. The environment is very bright and stimulating and ensures that children have a variety of engaging and creative activities which sustain their interest. Children make good progress during the year and leave Reception with skills in line with nationally expected levels, although still a little below in linking letters to sounds and in writing. The staff are aware of this and are increasingly using the outside space well to provide as many opportunities for writing, including a 'marble game' to help with letter formation. The children were seen during the inspection settling particularly well on their first day in Reception.

The small nature of the cohorts means that the children are taught with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils for part of the day. These pupils provide good role models for the children and they gain much from working with them. Children have a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. They were seen enjoying a physical education lesson along with the older children that was helping to promote their physical development well. Children are safe and feel secure, due to the exemplary care and welfare provided by the diligent and committed staff. Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adults regularly assess what the children know, understand and can do. The quality of these assessments is good and any relative underachievement is identified well. However, the building of this more firmly into lesson planning is not as robust as it could be as present.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Nearly 60% of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. They were very positive about all aspects of the school's work, particularly the extent to which the school keeps their children safe, the good quality of the teaching and the extent to which the children enjoy school. The inspector judged that the extent to which pupils feel safe is outstanding. A few parents and carers feel that the school did not help them to support their child's learning. The inspector followed up this concern and felt that this was something that the school is doing increasingly well, although the headteacher acknowledged that the older children could be having more homework.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Plumbland CoFE 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 48 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	71	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	50	14	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	50	12	43	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	64	10	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	46	12	43	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	46	14	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)	15	54	11	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	61	9	32	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	61	10	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	61	10	36	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	61	9	32	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	71	8	29	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Plumbland CofE School, Wigton CA7 2DQ**

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and I am very grateful for the excellent contribution you made to the inspection. You believe that your school is a good one that looks after you particularly well. I agree with you.

Here are some of the things that I particularly liked.

- You behave very well and you look after each other.
- You love coming to school and you are very keen to learn.
- Your teachers make your lessons interesting and they listen carefully to your ideas.
- The adults in school make sure that you are very safe and well cared for.

I also liked the mature way you work in your lessons. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that you get involved in working on your own or in small groups as early on in lessons as possible. I have also asked your teachers to involve you more in saying how well you are learning in each of your activities. You can help by asking your teachers to make it clear to you how you can tell if you are doing a good job.

It was a delight to have lunch with you and to see so many of you attend the activities club after school. I was particularly impressed by your ICT skills, especially your knowledge on how to search for information.

I would like to wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson  
Lead inspector

