

Hensingham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133726
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	381542
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Naomi Taylor

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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Holliday
Headteacher	Nick Fish
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons and observed the work of seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' monitoring and assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement planning, and curriculum and lesson plans. They analysed 76 parental questionnaires, together with a sample from staff and pupils.

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

- The attainment of pupils and how much progress is being made across the key stages in core subjects.
- How assessment information is being used to ensure all groups of pupils are being fully challenged in lessons.
- To what extent the curriculum and teaching engages and inspires all pupils.
- The quality of opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.

Information about the school

This is a below average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average but of those there are above average numbers of pupils with statements of special educational needs. A few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The school has Healthy School status. Since the last inspection there has been an acting headteacher. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2010. There is an on-site children's centre which is not managed by the governing body and therefore not part of this inspection. It is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report which will be available on the Ofsted website.

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

Hensingham Primary is a satisfactory school. It has several strengths and is improving. Pupils' progress and achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 are satisfactory and attainment is average. Leadership and management are satisfactory and self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher is clear about what is needed to improve the school further and has the support of all the staff and the governing body. Significant changes have been made to address areas of weakness, for example, a new tracking system is in place and staff now have ownership of assessing pupils' progress, setting challenging targets and intervening in pupils' learning if they need extra help. Some changes are in the early stages but are showing clear signs of improvement, although the impact on pupils' progress has yet to be fully realised. Senior leaders are involving teachers more in leading whole-school improvement initiatives to increase their accountability for pupils' progress. This is now having an impact on raising attainment and, consequently, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils, parents and carers are very appreciative of the good care, guidance and support the school gives which contributes well to pupils' personal development. Consequently, pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and behave well. The headteacher is keen to improve attendance to above average in order for pupils to be even better prepared for the next stage in their education. The school has good links with the local community to which pupils contribute willingly.

Children get a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress from starting points which are well below those expected for children of their age. They make satisfactory progress overall through Years 1 to 6, although the rate of progress differs between classes and year groups. At the end of Year 6 attainment is an improving picture and is broadly average. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. This leads to pupils not always being challenged sufficiently and slows their progress, although it remains satisfactory. There are sometimes missed opportunities across all subjects to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment to above the national average by building upon improvements in the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all lessons by:
 - ensuring that the work set in lessons effectively challenges all groups of pupils
 - providing pupils with every opportunity across the curriculum to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- Improve attendance to above average by further developing and refining the school's recent strategies so that pupils benefit from uninterrupted learning and reach their full potential.

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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils work hard, concentrate well and enjoy learning. In lessons pupils were seen to be making satisfactory progress and, in the more challenging lessons, sometimes better progress. Scrutiny of pupils' books and tracking of pupils' progress indicate that there is satisfactory and improving progress and achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers and some even better. They receive constructive specialist support from their teachers and teaching assistants which gives them the confidence and skills to succeed. Results in tests and assessments in Year 2 are rising.

Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. They treat others, staff and visitors with kindness and respect. They have a clear understanding of right from wrong and willingly take on responsibilities, for example as members of the school council. The vast majority of pupils are punctual and attend regularly but the headteacher is keen to improve this further and is developing strategies to do so. Pupils have good teamwork and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. These qualities, combined with their improving literacy and numeracy skills, mean they are satisfactorily equipped for their future lives. The Healthy School status reflects the fact that pupils enjoy taking part in sports and speak knowledgeably about how to eat healthy food. They were keen to say how safe they felt in school.

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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The school's monitoring of lessons shows that teaching is improving. In the best lessons work proceeds at a brisk pace and is well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and ensure that all groups of pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress. They make good use of varied resources including ICT to engage pupils' interest so they enjoy learning and 'talk partners' are a regular feature in lessons to reinforce learning. However, in some lessons pupils are all working together at the same pace when the different groups could be working independently on more challenging tasks and accelerating their learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are given clear pointers for improvement, although these are sometimes not followed up. Assessment data are used to identify where pupils have gaps in their learning and to give them the extra help they need to improve. The teaching assistants and volunteers make a valuable contribution to learning.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly and meets pupils' needs satisfactorily. There is a firm focus on raising attainment in English and mathematics. The Year 5 pupils were clearly enjoying working with a creative practitioner with whom they were making a film to reinforce their learning from their residential visit in Elterwater and the Year 6 pupils were highly engaged in an African drumming workshop. However, there are missed opportunities across the whole curriculum to extend literacy and numeracy skills. There is good participation in extra-curricular activities.

The good care, guidance and support make a strong contribution to pupils' progress and to all aspects of their personal development. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that all groups of pupils, particularly those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the expert help they need. Good links with other schools ensure that pupils move smoothly between the different stages of their education.

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

The before- and after-school provision offers a suitable range of activities for children attending. Behaviour is good and staff know the children well.

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?

The leadership and management of the headteacher have been instrumental in bringing about recent improvements to the school. His clear vision for improvement and the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels is welcomed by all staff. Recent improvements to the quality of teaching and the use of assessment data are beginning to raise attainment and improve pupils' achievement but have yet to have the full impact. Governance is satisfactory. Recent changes to the governing body are leading to increasing support for the school and further involvement in monitoring its work. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Staff are well trained in child protection. Partnerships successfully support the well-being and development of pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances. Consequently, all pupils are given good equal opportunities to succeed and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Leaders promote community cohesion well within the school and the local community but pupils' understanding of communities and cultures which are different to their own is not fully developed.

These are the grades for the 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	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's skills and knowledge when they join the Nursery are well below those expected for their age and are particularly low in literacy and personal and social development. Parents and carers appreciate the good induction meetings in the home and at school that prepare their children well for joining the school and help

them to settle quickly and happily. Good provision and the effective balance of teacher-led tasks and children choosing for themselves enable children to make good progress. Skills at the end of Reception are still below those expected for their age overall, although a significant minority of children are reaching the expected levels. Writing was a particular weakness in recent assessments and this is being addressed with a wider range of activities to promote writing in different learning areas.

Staff show a good commitment to the children’s care, safety and welfare. Children in the Nursery remember to put on aprons and roll up their sleeves for water play while in Reception they willingly tidy up after activities. One child confidently used a dustpan and brush to sweep up the sand. Excellent relationships ensure that children share resources, work well cooperatively and behave sensibly. Staff are skilled at capitalising on children’s learning by their effective interventions. They use every opportunity to extend and reinforce spoken language, especially in imaginative play. Assessment has improved since the last inspection. Progress is carefully recorded so that work can be tailored to individual needs and early interventions made. The facilities and resources for indoor learning are good and fully utilised. The outdoor area is very small and, although well used, there is insufficient space for children to choose and explore all the areas of learning. However, good use is made of the adjoining playground especially for physical development and the woodland area for language development and investigations as seen with the gathering of different leaves.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
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

The vast majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the education and care provided by the school. One parent commented on their child’s, ‘thirst for learning, which is down to the teacher’s enthusiasm’, and another referred to the staff as, ‘fantastic’. They believe the school is well led and they have seen improvements. Inspectors endorse these views. A small minority would like to be better informed on the progress of their children which the headteacher is in the process of addressing in response to the school’s recent parents and carers survey.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hensingham Community 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 174 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	51	34	45	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	43	57	31	41	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	49	30	39	6	8	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	43	38	50	1	1	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	42	55	31	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	47	36	47	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	51	36	47	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)	37	49	35	46	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	47	35	46	1	1	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	38	39	51	4	5	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	42	37	49	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	41	54	32	42	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	59	27	36	3	4	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).

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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hensingham Community Primary School, Whitehaven, CA28 8QZ

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when the team came to inspect your school recently. A particular thank you to those of you who gave your time to talk to us about how much you enjoy your work and the many activities you take part in outside of lessons. You made a valuable contribution to the inspection.

You attend a satisfactory and improving school where the staff do all they can to support and encourage you. The care you receive is good and is enhanced by your teachers working with other agencies beyond school. You respond by behaving well and working hard. The teaching you receive is satisfactory and improving. You make satisfactory progress and are becoming responsible and thoughtful young people. You have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. You are good at helping each other and told us how much you enjoy coming to school. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly in a warm and caring environment. The work done by staff in this area of the school is good.

We have asked that the school continues to improve the quality of teaching in lessons, providing opportunities to meet the needs of all ability groups, and ensuring that all subjects provide the opportunity for you to improve your literacy and numeracy skills. This, together with all pupils attending school regularly, will help to raise your attainment further and help you to achieve as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor
Lead Inspector

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