

Dean CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112336
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378467
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2012
Lead inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hammond
Headteacher	Lindsey Martin
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Five teachers and four teaching assistants were observed teaching or supporting 10 lessons. This included some short visits to small group sessions to observe the teaching and learning of letters and the sounds they make. The inspector listened to children from Key Stage 1 reading. Meetings were held with a small number of parents and carers, a group of pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, staff and a representative of the local authority. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. She observed the school's work, and documentation looked at included the school's self-evaluation and improvement-planning document, data on pupils' progress and attendance, the single central record of checks on the suitability of staff, policies relating to safeguarding of pupils and staff, and minutes of governing body meetings. The inspector scrutinised 59 questionnaires received from parents and carers alongside those received from staff and pupils.

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 well-below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well-below average. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school meets the government's current floor standard relating to pupils' attainment and progress. Awards gained by the school include Eco-School and Healthy School status.

Childcare provided on the school site is managed by an external provider 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers are right to appreciate the family-type ethos based on strong moral values. Pupils enjoy school a great deal. Attendance is well-above average and behaviour, safety and attitudes to learning are good. Care and support for pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those facing difficult circumstances, are excellent. Strong leadership is bringing about substantial improvement and pupils achieve well in reading. The school is not good because inconsistencies in teaching result in pupils' overall achievement being satisfactory rather than good, and variable in writing and mathematics. Provision in the Reception Year, although improved, is satisfactory rather than good.
- Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in all key stages. In response to the rigorous action taken by leaders, progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. However, there remains some inconsistency in progress between classes and some older pupils are still catching up on previous underperformance. By Year 6 overall attainment is average, with reading stronger than writing and mathematics. Although most girls achieve well in writing, boys' achievement in writing is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and improving. There is some good teaching but this is not yet consistent across the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and behaviour is managed well. Pupils are happy and ready to learn.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and conduct themselves admirably around the school. They feel safe and secure; teaching and the curriculum promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher is successfully bringing about improvement. Staff are held closely to account for pupils' progress. Teaching is monitored rigorously. Performance management and professional development are closely linked to school priorities. Consequently, teaching and pupils' achievement are improving securely.

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?

- Further improve achievement in mathematics by:
 - including more practical and relevant tasks in lessons
 - making even more use of assessment to identify gaps in pupils' learning and ensuring these are tackled quickly
 - improving the helpfulness of marking and target setting so that pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to improve.
- Improve boys' achievement in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for well-structured talk, drama and role play in preparation for writing
 - improving spelling and presentation of handwriting for some pupils
 - developing the curriculum further to encourage writing about meaningful activities, topics and themes that stimulate and interest pupils, especially boys.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - sharpening the focus on what pupils will learn in every lesson
 - making sure pupils of different abilities know how they can be successful in every lesson
 - providing challenge for all pupils through matching tasks more closely to different needs
 - maintaining good pace and challenge throughout all lessons
 - involving pupils more in assessing their own and each other's learning
 - using targets more consistently so that pupils know what they are aiming to improve.
- Improve provision for children in the Reception Year from satisfactory to good by:
 - developing further the opportunities for outdoor learning so that they match the learning intentions planned for indoors more closely
 - providing even more opportunities for creative and imaginative play both indoors and outdoors
 - ensuring adults make the most of all opportunities to talk with children and develop their imagination, creativity, language and communication skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enjoy learning. In the best lessons they work collaboratively to tackle challenging problems. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed working in pairs to work out how to use a range of instruments to measure themselves accurately. On a very few occasions when tasks are less challenging and less is expected of them, pupils' attention can wander and they are less industrious.

Children enter the Reception Year with development that is broadly typical for their age. Children make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment. Children are very happy in the Reception Year and settle into school quickly because good

links with parents and carers and the local pre-school group prepare children for school well. A good balance between adult-led sessions and activities chosen by children helps to meet children's needs. The outdoor area has improved a great deal since the previous inspection. However, the range of activities outdoors does not fully reflect the more carefully planned learning for indoors. Adults do not always make the most of opportunities to talk to pupils as they are playing to develop their imaginations, creativity and communication skills.

The vast majority of parents and carers consider progress to be good. This is the case for some year groups and progress is accelerating as the quality of teaching improves. However, there remain inconsistencies which mean that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. Although pupils make good progress in some year groups, this is not always sufficient to ensure they catch up on previous weaker progress. Achievement in English and mathematics is satisfactory. Girls' achievement in writing is better than boys'. Writing is improving, including for boys, especially when they can write about topics that stimulate their interest. Year 2 loved writing in many different ways about pirates, and in Year 5 and 6 pupils presented very well-constructed arguments for and against starting school at 7am! In Key Stage 2, handwriting is not always well presented and spelling is a weakness for some pupils. In mathematics, gaps in pupils' learning are beginning to be recognised and tackled more quickly with improved systems of assessment.

By Year 6, attainment is broadly average; it is above average for reading and average for writing and mathematics. Attainment is rising and more pupils in Years 5 and 6 are on target to reach the higher Level 5 in mathematics than in previous years and more boys are achieving at least satisfactorily in writing.

Attainment in reading is average at the end of Key Stage 1 and is above average at the end of Key Stage 2. A secure programme to teach early reading skills to children and pupils in Key Stage 1 prepares them suitably. As pupils move through the school, regular guided reading sessions and many opportunities to read to adults, often provided by volunteers, support their good progress.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enjoy learning and make similar progress to their peers. Staff know their needs well and external support is sought diligently to help meet their needs. Excellent care and support for individual pupils help them to be confident and take part in the full range of activities the school offers. They make very good progress in their personal development.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Parents and carers consider teaching to be good. They are right to hold this view of teaching in some year groups and it is improving overall. However, inconsistencies remain between year groups and subjects and its impact over time is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils are settled and ready to learn. Pupils' behaviour is well managed and staff are positive role models and promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching assistants are effective, especially in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those pupils at risk of falling behind. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning and pupils use laptops and computers confidently for their independent research.

In the best lessons pupils are engaged and collaborate well because tasks are challenging and well matched to their needs. What will be learned is made very clear. Learning moves on at a good pace, expectations are high and teachers' questioning probes and deepens pupils' thinking. For example, following a visit to a forest, pupils in Key Stage 1 were excited about finding out about different animals. They worked very well in groups using laptops to find out the answers to the questions they had posed. All pupils knew how they could be successful, including the more-able.

Inconsistencies in teaching remain. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils. They do not set out what will be learned in every lesson clearly enough, nor is it clear how pupils of different abilities should be successful. The pace of learning sometimes slows because tasks are not challenging enough and they are not well matched to different needs. Although pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own and each other's learning, this practice is not widespread. Pupils identify their own targets but these are not always focused upon sufficiently by staff or pupils to facilitate learning. Marking is helpful and supportive in English but is less supportive of improvement in mathematics.

The curriculum is improving and progress in basic skills is planned for satisfactorily. More rigorous and accurate assessment is helping to improve provision, as teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning and plan to tackle them, especially in mathematics; this rigour, however, is not fully embedded and there are still not enough practical tasks relevant to pupils' interests in mathematics. There are more opportunities for pupils to write about activities that interest them, especially boys, but these are not yet provided extensively enough through meaningful activities, events, topics and themes. Although there are some examples of well-structured talk, drama and role-play being used to prepare pupils to write successfully, these are not used often enough.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy lessons. Attendance is well-above average. Pupils say behaviour is good. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes when everyone is happily active. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in many respects in the wider world. They know about different types of bullying and are aware of the dangers when using technology. They say bullying is very rare and, that when pupils occasionally fall out with each other, staff are quick to help. Parents' and carers' views of behaviour and pupils' safety are overwhelmingly positive.

Year 6 pupils enjoy leading the whole school in the daily 'Move-It' exercise session. The Eco-council is highly active in promoting energy saving and recycling. The school council contributes effectively to decisions about the school and supports fundraising activities.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's strongly determined leadership is successful in bringing about improvements. There is a shared ambition among staff and the governing body, based on maintaining the strengths in care and support alongside improving provision and outcomes for pupils. Staff work well as team and are ambitious for the school. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the good capacity to improve is demonstrated clearly in accelerating progress and rising attainment. More rigorous systems of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and more robust monitoring of provision ensure that staff are held closely to account. Self-evaluation is accurate and the right priorities are identified. The management

of teaching performance and professional development are tightly focused on school priorities; staff are becoming more confident in sharing best practice internally. Other improvements include the improved outdoor area and resources available to Reception children. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. It supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, it is not yet supporting good progress in writing and mathematics and provision in the Reception Year is satisfactory.

The governing body is very supportive of the school, is well informed of pupils' progress and is closely involved in self-evaluation and school improvement planning. It upholds statutory responsibilities for safeguarding well, ensuring that only suitable adults work with children, that child protection arrangements are robust and risk assessment is carried out rigorously. Equality of opportunity is fundamental to the school's ambitions with increasing attention paid to ensuring every pupil achieves their potential. Discrimination of any form is not tolerated and the school is a cohesive and harmonious community. Parents and carers are closely involved in their children's learning and are highly supportive. Close links with church, support for families, and use of facilities such as the sports hall reflect the importance of the school within the local community.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



29 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dean CofE School, Workington CA14 4TH

Thank you for your warm welcome and willingness to talk to me about your school. You are a credit to your school. You enjoy school and your attendance is well-above average. You behave well and enjoy learning. It was good to see older pupils doing so much, like leading the exercise sessions in the morning and helping younger pupils at lunchtimes. This shows that the school is keen to help you to become mature and responsible individuals. Your school is satisfactory overall. Some of you achieve well but not everyone in all subjects. Your school is helping you to learn but there are a few things that could be better and your headteacher, staff and the governing body are keen to improve so that you can achieve well.

They have agreed to:

- help you to improve your achievement in mathematics, especially by finding ways to make activities relevant and interesting
- help boys achieve better standards in writing, especially by making sure you learn about interesting topics so that you want to write about them
- improve lessons so that you always learn at a good rate and that the tasks are just hard enough for you
- improve the experiences of children in the Reception Year so that they are able to be more creative and imaginative and talk more about what they are doing so that they improve their communication skills.

You can help by continuing to enjoy learning and school and attending regularly. I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith
Lead inspector

