

Silverdale St John's CE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119541
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379833
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2012
Lead inspector	Alastair Younger

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Dyer
Headteacher	Catherine Armistead
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
School address	Emesgate Lane Silverdale Carnforth LA5 0RF
Telephone number	01524 701467
Fax number	01524 701467
Email address	head@silverdale.lancs.sch.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

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

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

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

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

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

Alastair Younger

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Ten lessons were observed, two in the company of the headteacher. Four different teachers were seen. Meetings were held with senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with many pupils and staff. There were no available responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but the inspector took account of the views of 38 parents and carers who returned a questionnaire during the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the progress of pupils, their safety and school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-school serving the village and its rural surroundings. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and virtually all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

A breakfast and after-school club, not managed by the governing body, operates on the school site. This was not included in this inspection and is reported upon separately.

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. It is improving and has some important strengths including pupils' good behaviour and the school's strong leadership. It is not good because teaching is not consistently good or better and pupils' progress remains satisfactory. After a difficult period last year, the school is back on track for further improvement because leaders and managers are focusing strongly on improving teaching and learning in areas where they had slipped.
- Pupils are well behaved. They try hard in lessons and they are nearly always respectful of each other. Playtimes are happy occasions. Pupils develop good spiritual, moral and social values and a good understanding of their own and other cultures.
- Achievement is satisfactory. It is best in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6. Not enough higher-attaining pupils fulfil their potential.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is some good teaching and there are few inadequacies, but little that is outstanding. Teachers take great care to create a stimulating and celebratory learning environment in each classroom. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. A weakness in assessing the progress of Year 2 pupils last year led to disappointing results. Sometimes pupils are not entirely clear about what they have to do to achieve success.
- Leadership and management are good. Quality slipped last year through difficult circumstances, but the renewed focus on raising attainment and improving provision is paying dividends. Staff morale is exceptionally high, weaknesses in teaching are being systematically addressed and pupils' writing, which has been a weakness for some years, is continuing to improve.

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?

- In order to raise attainment and speed up progress ensure that teaching is at least good by:
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are always fully challenged to aspire to the higher levels
 - improving use of assessment data to ensure it gives a simplified, yet more accurate, picture of the on-going progress of pupils so that expectations can be rapidly adjusted upwards when pupils are seen to be coasting
 - giving extra support to meet targets when pupils are seen to be falling behind
 - ensuring that at the start of every lesson all pupils fully understand what they need to do to achieve success and making sure that at the end of each lesson they are helped to see how well they have done.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

During the inspection pupils were seen to be making good progress in just over a half of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. Pupils join the school with skills that are expected for their age and leave at the end of Year 6 with slightly above average attainment.

Most of the good progress is seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the Years 5/6 classroom. Monitoring by the school suggests that this is frequently the case. Some particularly good progress was seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage as children were expertly taught the sounds made by different letter combinations to help them improve their reading. Last year, attainment in Key Stage 1 fell from above to broadly average. Few pupils reached Level 3 of the National Curriculum when more could reasonably have been expected to. Teaching has considerably improved in this key stage and pupils are once again beginning to fulfil their full potential. In a well-taught science lesson, for example, pupils were enthused in their learning about how to investigate the ideal properties of a container for carrying eggs and, with helpful guidance and support, were able to make good progress. Years 5 and 6 pupils were seen making rapid and enthusiastic progress as they identified features that contributed to good poetry writing. Most worked and concentrated hard, cooperated well with each other and were proud of their accomplishments. At issue, however, was the fact that a few of the higher-attaining pupils could have moved on to develop their ideas further beyond the constraints of the planned lesson. Last year too many pupils who had attained a higher level at the end of Key Stage 1 did not match this by attaining Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2. Assessment procedures have improved this year, but still do not pick up on all pupils in danger of not meeting their targets or who are coasting and could do better.

Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 fell from above to broadly average last year. Several pupils from this group read confidently to the inspector and talked enthusiastically about their books, some identifying titles, authors, illustrators, chapters and characters. A minority said that the books were 'too easy'. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in reading is well above average.

Parents and carers unanimously report that they feel their children are making good progress and that their children's needs are being met. The inspector found that, while there is some good teaching, overall progress is satisfactory. No specific group of pupils underachieves, including those pupils with special educational needs. Within the group of potentially higher-attaining pupils a few do not achieve as well as they could.

Quality of teaching

Over half of the teaching observed during the inspection was good and the rest satisfactory. Monitoring by the headteacher and the local authority suggests that there are occasional instances of outstanding teaching, especially in the Years 5/6 and Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms, but this same monitoring also reports some weaknesses elsewhere. This is why teaching is judged to be satisfactory rather than good. This is not the view of parents and carers who are unanimous in saying that teaching is good, nor the view of pupils who also feel they are well taught nearly all of the time.

As an example of good teaching, the Years 5/6 teacher introduced the idea of percentages to pupils. From easy examples she quickly raised the pace, presenting groups of pupils with ever harder examples, always challenging them but never outfacing them. Pupils were constantly asked to share what they were learning with each other and to work cooperatively for the common good – an impressive way of promoting social and moral values. What stopped this teaching from being outstanding was that, having set a particularly challenging investigative task for the higher attainers, they were not given enough time to solve it.

When teaching is only satisfactory it is often because the teacher presents pupils with an unclear picture of expectations for the lesson. This means that some pupils are uncertain as to what they are expected to do. It is significant that about a quarter of pupils expressed the view that they do not know how well they are doing in school. There are also instances when pupils are given tasks which occupy them, but contain little challenge and lead to no new learning. Sometimes all pupils in the class are set the same tasks, irrespective of their ability. This more frequently disadvantages higher-attaining pupils, as they mark time towards the end of lessons, than lower-attaining ones who benefit from appropriate support from classroom assistants.

Although improving rapidly, there are still some weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' progress at Key Stage 1. There are occasions when predicted outcomes bear insufficient relation to what has happened in the past; for instance when a pupil who has made little progress in two terms is suddenly predicted to make a whole level (three sub levels) of progress in the coming term.

Teachers are generally good at setting tasks which interest and motivate pupils and encourage them to achieve across all aspects of a good, varied curriculum. There is wholehearted promotion of aesthetic activities such as music and art; physical education is enthusiastically taught and much enjoyed. Teachers take care to associate enrichment activities with learning opportunities. This helps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are very well behaved. Minor exceptions are usually petty squabbles, which involve few, and often younger, pupils and are quickly resolved. More serious misbehaviour is very rare. Records show that when it occurs the school is good at finding out its reasons and securing the help and support individuals may need. The typical situation is that the school forms a very well-ordered, safe and harmonious community. Pupils are sociable and articulate and very polite to visitors. They play together happily at break times and in most lessons they cooperate well to help each other. Pupils are made highly aware of what may constitute an unsafe situation and how to use computer networks safely. Parents and carers strongly express the view that there is a good standard of behaviour and that lessons are rarely disrupted. The large majority also say that bullying in any form is dealt with effectively. Pupils agree; none feel bullied and all feel safe. The findings of the inspection support these views. A reason why behaviour is not judged even more favourably is that while behaviour for learning is strongly promoted by the school there are still a few, usually higher-attaining, pupils who are content to settle quietly upon having achieved the learning objective of a lesson, rather than demonstrating the attitude and drive to ask for more.

Pupils are punctual and attend well. Attendance remains above average, but has dipped in recent years. The school is actively pursuing this, for instance by reviewing its policy on authorising absence for family holidays.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers are very supportive of the current leadership and management team, including the role of the governing body. They are unanimous in saying they would recommend this school to another parent or carer, that they are being helped to support their child's learning and that the school is meeting their child's particular needs. It is very evident that more senior staff are the best teachers, well placed to support weaker or less experienced ones and lead by example.

The difficulty is that improvement over time has been compromised by last year's circumstances, when the redeployment of a teacher to an unfamiliar age group coincided with the absence of a mentoring senior leader. This led to a slowing of development. This issue is now resolved, with the result that teaching is improving. It is at least satisfactory and frequently good. Over the past two terms intensive and effective support has been given, teaching is improving and pupils are making faster progress. Every member of staff expresses the view that appropriate provision is made for their own professional development and that they are proud to be associated with the school. The evidence of inspection supports these views.

There is a good curriculum that is broad and balanced and extensively enriched. There is a good focus on promoting numeracy and literacy across the curriculum. This is complemented by a strong focus on developing other skills, for instance, allowing individuals to gain status and respect through their physical or artistic prowess. A few parents and carers feel that there is too much enrichment in the form of visits, visitors and activities outside of the national curriculum. The findings of the inspection support the enrichment opportunities and would like to reassure parents and carers. In most instances they either support learning or contribute particularly well to their children's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There is no discrimination in terms of race, gender, ability or social standing. In this school every pupil is treated equally. All arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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 Silverdale St John's CE Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Carnforth, LA5 0RF**

What a joy it was to visit your school the other day. I know you were told I was a visitor but I actually came to inspect your school so that I could write a report about how you are getting on.

The answer is: your school is satisfactory. The point is, though, that it could be so much better. A few of you do not do as well as you should. Sometimes this is because your teachers do not make you work hard enough. At other times it's because you don't let them know when the work they are giving you is too easy and you are keeping quiet about it. That's no way to reach for the stars. The progress you make is satisfactory. You leave school at a slightly higher than average standard of attainment than most pupils in other schools. It would not take much to make this a much higher level and for your school to be at least good and eventually outstanding. To help with this I have made some suggestions about how teachers could make sure you fulfil your potential. Included in these are the recommendations that the cleverer ones are given harder work, that you all know exactly what is expected of you before you start learning in each lesson and that you know whether you have met these expectations at the end of each lesson.

I was very impressed by your good behaviour and reassured that your school is a very safe place. I was also impressed by the way your leaders and managers are working so hard and effectively to make your school better.

It is now up to you to work hard, have fun, keep on being friendly to each other.

Yours sincerely,

Alastair Younger
Lead inspector

