

St Herbert's CofE (VA) Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134789
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	381742
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Pye

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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Stuart Penny
Headteacher	Mrs Shelagh Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Pye
Naomi Taylor

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons or part-lessons, taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, teachers, support staff, representatives from the local education authority and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, looked at school development planning and progress monitoring documentation. They listened to pupils reading and also examined pupils' workbooks. Inspectors' also analysed 88 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Herbert's is an average-sized primary school serving part of a small rural town. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has a nationally accredited Healthy School status and also holds the Activemark and Investors in People award. As an Eco School, it has received the Bronze award.

The headteacher took up post during the Spring Term 2012.

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	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving but it is not good because not enough teaching is good and pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 requires improvement. The new headteacher has provided a clear direction for improvement. This has energised the staff and pupils, who comment on how much the school has moved forward. Parents and carers believe the school has improved recently, especially the quality of teaching and pupils' interest in their work. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. They start school with skills that are below those expected for their age and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress overall by the time they leave school. The new curriculum has enabled teachers to follow up pupils' interests and resulted in making learning more enjoyable. It is making a positive contribution towards the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, staff have not yet identified the most effective methods for teaching calculations or extending the pupils' vocabulary for writing.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In lessons where teaching is good, pupils are eager to learn because tasks are challenging and the pace is brisk. Carefully targeted use of interventions is closing gaps in pupils' learning. However, in some lessons expectations are too low to enable the more able to make accelerated progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, pupils report that they feel safe and incidents of any form of bullying are rare. Pupils are polite and helpful to one another. They show good attitudes to learning.
- Leaders, managers and the governing body have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in their school. Leadership of teaching is satisfactory. The school manages performance satisfactorily by ensuring teachers are equipped to assess pupils' learning accurately. The new headteacher has implemented several actions leading to improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics to be at least good by:
 - setting higher expectations for the more able pupils
 - enhancing the curriculum so that it systematically introduces pupils to new vocabulary to add more interest to their work
 - equipping pupils with the most effective methods that will better enable them to solve mathematical calculations.
- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good by:
 - sharing existing good practice
 - ensuring tasks always closely match pupils' abilities and that the pace of learning is brisk enough to move pupils on more quickly with their learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers believe that their children achieve well. Inspectors found that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but good for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children join the Nursery class with a varying level of skills which are, overall, below those for their age. They quickly learn to link letters and sounds because these sessions are sharply focused. The children are involved, challenged and excited by their learning environment and consequently make good progress overall. For example, in a good Reception lesson children dressed as builders, used 'cement mixers' in the sand pit and constructed houses out of wood and straw and bricks in response to the story of the 'Three Little Pigs'. The same theme also contributed towards their good cultural development because they compared buildings associated with different religions. Most children are close to the level expected for their age when they start Year 1.

Where work in lessons is challenging and closely matched to pupils' abilities they learn well, but this is not consistent across the school, particularly in writing and mathematics and for more-able pupils. In Year 2 pupils enjoy learning and make good progress because work is challenging and well matched to their abilities. This is also the case in Years 5 and 6 when the pace of learning accelerates to meet the higher expectations. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 had declined in recent years but there is clear evidence of a reversal in this downward trend for current cohorts in English and mathematics. However, expectations for the more able are not consistently high enough for them to make good progress overall. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attainment in reading is above average. Most pupils decode words well and progress in reading is more developed than in other areas. However, attainment in writing is broadly average because pupils do not always apply a range of interesting vocabulary to their work. There are no significant gaps between the performance of boys and girls. The very few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress because of the level of support they receive within lessons.

Quality of teaching

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Inspectors saw good teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and upper Key Stage 2 classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with a wide range of stimulating activities, both indoors and out, to encourage them to explore and learn. Pupils, parents and carers say that teaching has improved and lessons have become more interesting since the arrival of the new headteacher. In the best lessons new learning is acquired quickly and teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to know and use marking and feedback well to identify clear next steps for pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson pupils had to explore the effectiveness of different materials to separate a flour and water mix. The teacher skilfully questioned individuals and introduced new lines of enquiry in response to their knowledge, including proving that any experiments were carried out fairly. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers do not consistently set challenging work that matches the abilities of all pupils, especially in writing and mathematics. This is because teachers do not systematically introduce a variety of interesting vocabulary and ensure that pupils apply this to their writing so that it adds interest to their work. In some mathematics lessons the rate of progress slowed because the pupils were not using the most effective methods to work out calculations.

Guided reading sessions across the school have contributed to pupils' improved reading comprehension and enjoyment. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson one group used the information in the text to create a diary entry for a day in a Victorian school. Another group worked closely with the teacher, who challenged them to explain their answers to his questions using clues in the text. Well-targeted interventions by teaching assistants and teachers ensure that pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, they feel safe and report that bullying is extremely rare. This was borne out by inspection observations, past records and the views of parents and carers. There have been no exclusions or reported racial incidents in the last three years. Governors and staff ensure that rewards are used effectively and help pupils understand what is expected of them. The school successfully promotes good behaviour by its welcoming, caring ethos. The pupils mirror this by being polite and eager to welcome visitors. Their behaviour around school is thoughtful and courteous, especially at lunchtime when they organise themselves into meaningful games. Positive attitudes spill over to larger gatherings. Inspectors observed good behaviour during both assemblies. The school takes all appropriate measures to keep the pupils safe and the site secure. As a result, pupils have a very clear understanding about personal safety. Pupils also have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Their spiritual and social development is enhanced by the opportunities they have to use the outdoors. For example, a Year 1 and 2 class celebrated the diversity of plant life outside school as part of an investigation. The lesson also promoted good social skills because pupils had to work collaboratively in order to collect the information. The curriculum includes visits out of school and a significant emphasis on giving pupils the chance to play a musical instrument. Inspectors viewed the Year 6 production of 'Oliver' and were impressed by pupils' contribution to the acting and singing. Links with a local retirement home provide good opportunities for younger children to share experiences with a different generation. All this adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. Levels of attendance are in line with the national average and punctuality to school is good.

Leadership and management

The impact of the new headteacher's enthusiasm and determination to improve the school is evident in recent improvements. She has acted quickly, following a rigorous and accurate audit of what the school needs to do to improve. Many parents and carers comment on the 'immediate and positive improvements since the new head took over'. There is a clear sense of a common purpose amongst staff to improve the school's performance. Morale is high because staff feel that they have been given more freedom and increased confidence to develop the satisfactory curriculum to make it more meaningful to the pupils. This includes greater use of the outdoors in order to increase pupils' first-hand experiences, which has made a significant contribution to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Recently, senior leaders within the school have introduced effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and are now acting upon the data to accelerate progress and raise standards. The school has appropriate policies in place to ensure that pupils have equal access to all it has to offer. Improving systems for tracking pupils' progress ensure that any at risk of falling behind are identified. For example, the impact of work to support lower-achieving pupils and to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been particularly effective. This has contributed to improvements in pupils' attainment, especially in Years 5 and 6. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvements.

The governing body is very clear about the focus for raising pupils' achievement and supports fully the headteacher's drive for improvement. They ensure that the school is used and valued by the local community, and underpin the caring and welcoming nature of the school. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet national requirements and that discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Herbert's CofE (VA) Primary and Nursery School, Keswick
CA12 4HZ**

Thank you all for your warm welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed the tour of the school with some of you. You were very polite and kind to us. We are also grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Wednesday lunchtime. We were very pleased with the way you support each other confidently in class.

St Herbert's is a satisfactory school. The rate of progress you make is improving but is not yet good. The teaching you receive is satisfactory so that, by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, your attainment is broadly average. You behave well and have good knowledge about how to stay safe. The adults who work with you care for and look after you well. In turn, older pupils look after younger children very well, too. You are not afraid to give visitors advice on how to stay healthy! Your school makes good use of the outside setting and is effective at promoting your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are very proud of you and they are always looking for ways to make the school even better. We would like to help them with this, so we have asked your teachers to set higher expectations for the more able pupils. To help them with this, we have asked that the pace of some lessons quickens and that all your work is challenging in order to help you learn faster. We would also like your school to teach quicker methods to help you work out calculations. Finally, we would like your school to introduce you to much more varied vocabulary that will make your writing even better.

Thank you again for your kindness to us. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pye
Lead inspector

