

Culgaith CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112302
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378457
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Morley

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	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Smith
Headteacher	Lynn Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2008
School address	Culgaith Penrith CA10 1QL
Telephone number	01768 88655
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Morley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited eight lessons, observing three teachers and one student teacher. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair and another member of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspector also heard six pupils read. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of the meetings of the governing body, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of 25 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those completed by staff.

Information about the school

Culgaith is a very small village voluntary-aided school. Pupils live in Culgaith or surrounding villages and all are from a White British heritage. No pupil is at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that seen nationally. There is a small number of pupils working at School Action Plus and none with a statement of special educational needs. The school is currently in transition, moving from a First to a Primary School.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Comments such as, 'My children have benefited hugely from being part of this great school' confirm parents' and carers' very positive views of the school. From a starting point in line with that expected for their age, children get off to a good start and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good start is built on effectively, resulting in pupils' attainment being above average by the end of Year 4. The school is not outstanding because while progress in mathematics is good for most pupils, it is not the case for all pupils.
- Teaching is largely good with examples of outstanding practice within the Early Years Foundation Stage. There have been improvements in the teaching of reading and writing and as a result, progress is rising for all pupils. Lessons move at a very fast pace and teachers are highly effective in ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do and how to do it. The teaching of mathematics is not as good as that seen in the teaching of reading, writing and topic work.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils take the lead on ensuring that their 'Golden Rules' make Culgaith a very happy, secure and thriving place for all. Attendance is above average and pupils say that the school teaches them the dangers of bullying in all its forms. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the internet.
- Leadership and management are good. This stems from the highly effective leadership of the headteacher and a team approach. The management of performance is effective and a key element in the school's success. Teaching is closely monitored, leading to effective targeting of staff training. The good curriculum has some outstanding features. The governing body is actively engaged in the school and it holds the leaders to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the rates of pupils' progress in mathematics by improving the consistency in the quality of mathematics teaching by:
 - ensuring a tighter match of work to individual pupils' needs
 - ensuring that pupils take greater care with their work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are enthusiastic and show good levels of engagement in lessons, are very proud of their work and are keen to do well. Their high level of interest and genuine enjoyment of learning have a major impact on their achievement. For example, the Early Years Foundation Stage focus on the theme of pirates ensures a wealth of valuable and exciting experiences that motivate pupils to contribute to their learning. Throughout the school, learning in lessons is effective because pupils are very keen to contribute. They very eagerly discuss their work and take on board comments made by teachers when their work is marked. Pupils always try to improve on their previous best. Older pupils evaluate the quality of their own work with accuracy. They collaborate very well when working with a partner or in a group.

On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills are in line with the expectations for their age group. Good learning opportunities in an exciting learning environment, both inside and out, alongside a high level of care mean that children are making increasingly rapid progress. By the time they enter Year 1, many are exceeding what is expected for their age in a number of areas of learning.

Evidence from the school's assessment data, from lesson observations and from scrutiny of work in pupils' books confirmed that, through the rest of the school, pupils, including the more-able, progress at a good rate in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics, while good overall, is a little slower than that in reading and writing. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress, as a result of the very well-targeted support the school provides for them. By the time the pupils complete Year 4, their attainment, including that in reading, is above that expected for their age, ensuring that pupils are well-equipped with the knowledge and skills for their next stage of education. Pupils show increasing enthusiasm for reading and many read independently at home. The pupils enjoy their work linking letters and sounds (phonics) and by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is above average. However, because of the small cohorts, this can vary year to year. The quality of provision and attitudes to reading mean that most pupils display above average levels of fluency and most can decode complex vocabulary.

Pupils are making good progress because pupils, staff and leaders, with the strong support of parents and carers, have high expectations. All parents' and carers' responses to the questionnaire agreed with inspectors and indicated that they are extremely happy with their children's progress and attainment.

Quality of teaching

The overall quality of teaching is good with major strengths in planning, in the high expectations as to what pupils can achieve, the linking of different curriculum areas and in the fast pace to most lessons. As a result, pupils make increasingly rapid progress and pupils talk confidently about what they are doing. Teaching assistants provide valuable support especially with regard to pupils who have special educational needs, ensuring that their needs are met fully. The highly committed staff use their excellent subject knowledge well to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers make effective use of the planned curriculum by ensuring that pupils' own interests are linked well into the chosen topics, with plenty of opportunities provided for them to discuss their ideas. The topic work and imaginative approaches to lessons mean that pupils are very engaged and motivated.

There are major strengths in the teaching of reading and writing, and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use these skills throughout the curriculum, and within information and communication technology (ICT). Story-telling is a key motivating factor within lessons. Imaginatively-planned learning opportunities, for example, the use of mind maps, generates high levels of enthusiasm and co-operation in learning. In an excellent lesson in Class 2, pupils were actively engaged in exploring the theme of the Romans and at the same time developing literacy skills in writing a scene for a play. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and teaching assistants plan exciting, purposeful opportunities, indoors and out, to engage and interest children. In exploring their topic on the pirates, pupils were totally engrossed, developing some high-quality communication and language skills. The pupils are confident and respond well to the high-quality, direct teaching of phonics. There are many examples of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being built in well to what pupils are being asked to learn.

The teaching of mathematics is less effective with some inconsistency. On occasions, pupils are not given work that is matched to their needs and they do not always take the same level of care over their mathematics work as in reading and writing.

Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire strongly agree that children are taught well. For example, one parent commented. 'I have three children at the school and all are well-taught and challenged to do well'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a very calm and orderly community. Pupils take the lead in promoting and engaging in outstanding behaviour which is manifest in their golden rules. They relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. Outstanding behaviour is the norm at Culgaith. Pupils know the high standards of behaviour expected of them and meet these even when unsupervised. Around the school, they play well together and are very kind to one another. Relationships are excellent. The older children understand their responsibility to model good behaviour and safe practice. They ensure that, as well as looking after the younger children on the playground and around school, they help them understand how to behave well. Within lessons pupils listen attentively, contribute to discussions confidently and work very hard. Pupils know they are valued as individuals. In lessons and discussions, they display a maturity which is frequently beyond their years.

Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils were keen to pay testament to the emphasis the school places on their safety and happiness and made

particular mention of the support they receive from adults when they have worries or are unhappy. They have confidence in the school's procedures for keeping them safe and say they feel very secure at school. This view is confirmed by parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand what constitutes bullying in all its various forms. They are confident that they have the skills to resolve any potential conflicts for themselves. An analysis of the completed inspection questionnaires for pupils confirmed these judgements. All pupils felt that behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school. Attendance is consistently above average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's very successful drive for continuous improvement is shared by all members of the school team although the teaching team is at an early stage of development in taking the initiative to drive improvements. It is very much a team approach and all staff feel valued and share a common vision for taking the school forward. As one member of staff stated: 'This school is fantastic, I love coming to work'. As a result, pupils make good progress with levels of attainment above those expected for their age by the time pupils complete Year 4. The school has a strong capacity to maintain and build on the improvements made. This is because it has an accurate view of its provision and a highly enthusiastic staff. The leadership and management of teaching is good. All staff comment favourably about how they have benefited from professional development opportunities to enhance their skills. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice and attainment continues to rise.

The governing body and leadership team ensure that equality and awareness of diversity are promoted very well. As a result, all pupils are given every opportunity to excel in what they do. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

The curriculum has some outstanding features, especially with regard to the opportunities pupils are given to use their reading and writing skills within their topic and ICT work. Pupils use ICT extensively, both within lessons and when working independently. They demonstrate good skills in ICT and, as early as the Reception class, use computers with confidence. Through their topic work, pupils have opportunities to see links between subjects. Great care is taken to ensure that the core skills of literacy and numeracy are provided for in topics. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is good, resulting in an abundance of exciting and vibrant learning experiences which have a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very appreciative of the extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which are popular and well-attended.

One hundred per cent of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were unanimous that they would recommend this school to another parent. One parent commented, 'I would recommend this school to anyone. We are really pleased that we chose this school for our children.'

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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 up 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.



30 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culgaith C of E School, Penrith, CA10 1QL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and appreciated all of your kindness. The pupils who spoke to me during a lunch-time break were magnificent ambassadors for your school, as all of you are. I really enjoyed having lunch with you and watching you play so well together. It was wonderful to see how keen you all are in lessons and how well you respond to learning challenges.

You behave outstandingly well, get on extremely well together and take tremendous care of each other. You work and play well together. You are a real credit to your families and your teachers. Across the school it was a delight to see how well you are developing your reading and writing skills. I really enjoyed seeing you learn about the Romans and especially the pirates. Watching the Early Years Foundation Stage children make their treasure map in the sand pit was fantastic.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do even better. To help them in this I have asked them to ensure that your mathematics lessons are as good as your reading, writing and topic lessons; and to ensure you take greater care with your mathematics work. You can help by maintaining your above average attendance record, helping your friends and keeping up the hard work.

Once again, thank you for making me so welcome. Keep being kind to each other; help your teachers and work hard to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Morley
Lead Inspector

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