

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112357
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378473
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Adrian Francis

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Patterson
Headteacher	Nicola Rielly
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Adrian Francis

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited seven lessons taught by five teachers and talked with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector took account of the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils, and the 104 returned by parents and carers. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, teachers' planning, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching and a range of data.

Information about the school

The overwhelming majority of the pupils who attend this smaller than average-sized primary school come from White British backgrounds. A much smaller than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs fluctuates year on year because of the small size of the cohorts. It is currently well below the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has achieved Artsmark accreditation, the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award, the Silver Eco Award and has gained Healthy School status. There is an out-of-school club that provides before- and after-school care that is managed by the governing body. In January 2012 the school became federated with another local Catholic primary school of similar size, now led by the headteacher of Our Lady of the Rosary. The federation appointed an assistant headteacher to support leadership and management in each 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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching is not yet leading to pupils’ outstanding progress and achievement. The school has a strong focus on providing high quality care for pupils and developing their well-being. Pupils and their parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that the school provides a happy, caring and safe environment.
- The achievement of pupils is good and they reach above average attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels of writing has increased as a result of the initiatives that have been introduced. Children in the Reception Year make rapid progress thanks to the high quality provision and the well-designed curriculum.
- Excellent curriculum planning inspires the good teaching. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations and use assessment well to provide a high level of challenge for all ability groups. However, this is not the case in all lessons and teachers do not use written feedback well enough as a tool for improvement. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are provided with highly tailored, effective support.
- Behaviour and safety are good. This is because of the family atmosphere of this small school and the high expectations which all staff have for behaviour. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.
- The headteacher has worked effectively to develop and improve the quality of teaching, with performance being managed effectively. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is effective in identifying key priorities to be tackled. Data on pupils’ progress is tracked and analysed but leaders do not always provide a clear picture of the progress being made by specific groups of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and achievement by:
 - ensuring that all teachers provide a high degree of challenge for all ability groups and enable pupils to start their learning more quickly in lessons
 - providing clear written feedback that guides improvement
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to respond to written feedback.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management of teaching by:
 - making more effective use of pupil progress data so that the school has a clearer picture of the progress being made by specific groups.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The small size of the cohorts makes it hard to distinguish trends in children's skills on entry. Generally, they are broadly average with a wide-ranging spread of abilities, but with a greater proportion at the higher end of the scale than the bottom. Skills and abilities are generally lower in the language and communication and personal and social aspects. The Reception children learn very eagerly in the high quality and well-resourced environment, where they become thoroughly engrossed in their tasks. During the inspection, children from Reception worked very successfully with children from Key Stage 1 to develop their discussion skills. They used their teddy bears as a focus and worked very effectively in groups, each member of the group taking on a specific role, before feeding back their findings to the whole class.

In Year 1 to Year 6, pupils respond positively to opportunities that allow them to investigate and work in small groups, adopting a 'critical skills' approach, which is consistent throughout the school. The large majority of pupils work attentively and demonstrate that they are able to apply skills learned in one subject to other subjects across the curriculum. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 literacy lesson, pupils worked effectively together in groups to write a clear set of instructions for making an egg cosy. Their written work was enhanced because they could draw upon their learning in design and technology, where they had each made an egg cosy to celebrate the diamond jubilee.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment throughout the school has been variable due to differences in the small cohorts. However, improvements in teaching to ensure a focus on writing over the past year have led to better progress, particularly for higher attaining pupils. As a result pupils' attainment in writing is above average. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average. Inspection evidence and pupils' current work indicate that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils of all abilities have developed the capacity to apply themselves thoroughly to their work without direct supervision and persevere until it is complete. Conversation at their tables revolves around the best way to approach the tasks. As a result of such self-discipline, pupils achieve well in lessons, and increase their rate of progress.

Boys and girls make similarly good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also learn well and make good progress as a result of high quality support and well targeted interventions by teachers and support staff. Parents and carers are right to consider their children make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teachers make good use of assessment to plan pupils' learning. They ask targeted questions to check pupils' understanding, and constantly judge what progress they are making. In a Years 5 and 6 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher supported groups of pupils in their discussions about constructing a story map in order to assess how far their learning had progressed and which aspects they were having difficulty with. Occasionally, teachers spend too long with the whole class introducing the lesson, not all groups of pupils are challenged and a small minority of pupils become restless. The quality of marking of books and feedback to pupils is inconsistent. There are good examples of evaluative comments, which point out the next steps in learning, but they are not apparent in all classes and subjects. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' guidance. Some pupils are not sure how well they are doing. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well provided for. Teaching assistants are usually deployed well. They support the learning and progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs very effectively alongside promoting their independence. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults develop children's learning well with careful questioning and reinforcement of vocabulary and ideas.

The school's carefully planned and enriching cross-curricular approach to learning inspires and motivates pupils, and teachers' enthusiastic manner takes good account of pupils' interests. Activities are typically well presented as a wide variety of tasks to suit different learning styles. This engages pupils well. There are purposeful links between subjects through activities that have strong connections with the real-life application of the skills being learned. This contributes strongly to promoting pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most lessons feature good questions that develop learning effectively, because teachers set high expectations for pupils' responses and ensure that time is given for pupils to answer, often helping each other where needed. Reading is taught well across the school and pupils tackle new texts with confidence, effectively applying the skills they have been taught.

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their child is taught well at this school. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school's records, along with inspection observations, indicate that behaviour over time is good. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, most pupils have developed excellent work habits in class. On the occasions in lessons where pupils may become restless, this is often as a result of a lack of challenge or pace in the learning.

The 'family' atmosphere of the school, often mentioned by parents and carers and by pupils, is very much evident in the dining hall, in the playground and around the school. Older boys and girls organise games and play with younger pupils, and help them develop their skills, for example in ball games. Younger pupils, including the children in Reception, are confident in the playground and mix easily with older ones. Pupils are accepting of one another's differences and make every effort to include disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in their games.

Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and the important difference between bullying and friends falling out. They feel that no one deliberately behaves badly in class or in the playground. They say that they know about cyber-bullying and understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They feel protected on the internet at school because unsuitable websites are blocked. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their child is safe and well looked after at school and that behaviour is good. Pupils' enjoyment of school is supported by their attendance, which is above average, and their punctuality, which is good.

Leadership and management

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has managed performance effectively to build a staff team with common goals and a shared vision for improvement. Consequently, there is a strong team ethos. Improvements to self-evaluation ensure that leaders know the strengths and areas for development. Appropriate areas for improvement are identified in the school improvement plan. The Early Years Foundation Stage is now a strength of the school, with curriculum planning and well-resourced provision being significant factors. Arrangements for safeguarding are rigorous, equality is well promoted and discrimination tackled effectively. The school consequently has the capacity for further continuous improvement.

Improvements in teaching have stemmed from regular monitoring and ongoing professional development for all staff. This has been particularly successful in improving the teaching of writing. Teachers use a wealth of pupil tracking data to inform them of pupils' progress but school leaders do not always use the information effectively enough to give them a clear understanding of the progress being made by specific groups of pupils across the school.

The school's curriculum is excellent because it is creative and imaginative, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Half-termly topics are studied, with appropriate coverage for pupils' age groups and this contributes to the pupils' feeling of whole-school unity and shared learning across the school. Art is a particular strength, with excellent artwork on display and a range of enrichment adding to pupils' cultural experiences. The imaginative ways in which the curriculum is brought to life complement thorough whole-school planning; for example, the Narnia display and 3-D models that supported the literacy work in lower Key Stage 2. There is a range of extra-curricular activities. Several parents and carers remarked on the caring learning environment, the commitment of all the staff and the hard working ethos of the school, a view supported widely by the pupils. The governing body is knowledgeable and highly supportive but there is less evidence of challenge to senior leaders regarding the school's performance.

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 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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School, Dalton-in-Furness, LA15 8JH

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently, particularly those of you who read to me or spoke to me about your work and what it is like to go to your school. I am writing to tell you about my findings.

I found that your school is a good school which is giving you a good start to your education. These are some of the things I found.

- I agree with you that you learn a lot in lessons and that the school helps you to do well, particularly in reading. Your teachers know you very well and give you the work that you need to help you make good progress.
- Your parents and carers told us that you feel safe at school, and I was able to confirm that you are well cared for and that any instances of poor behaviour are handled well by staff. I was very pleased to see that your behaviour in class and around school and your relationships with one another are very positive.
- Your school is well led and you are given exceptionally good opportunities to learn new things in all subjects of the curriculum, and to develop other skills and interests, particularly through your trips to interesting places and visitors to school.

We have asked the teachers and those who lead your school to make sure that:

- teachers' marking shows you more clearly how to improve your work
- the work provided for you is well matched to what you need to learn next
- they carefully evaluate how much the changes they make improve your progress in lessons.

You can all help by always taking responsibility for paying full attention in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Francis
Lead inspector

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