

Langdale CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112321
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378462
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ursula Leveaux
Headteacher	Mark Squires
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sue Sharkey

Additional Inspector

The inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed three teachers and one teaching assistant while visiting six lessons. Discussions were held with the headteacher, school staff, pupils, parents and carers, and members of the governing body. The inspector observed pupils' work, listened to pupils read and looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's system for tracking pupils' progress, documents regarding the safeguarding of pupils and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 26 parents and carers were scrutinised and those from school staff and pupils were also taken into account.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is above average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs currently on roll. Pupils are taught in two classes: Reception with Years 1 and 2 and Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 together. The number of pupils in each year group can be as few as one. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

An after-school club and a weekly Parent and Toddler group operate under the management of the governing body. The school has gained the Go4it and Adventure Learning School awards for its work in adventurous learning.

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 where pupils make good progress in a stimulating, rich and adventurous environment. Overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding because attainment, whilst rising, is not above average in English and mathematics and pupils are not making outstanding progress overall.
- Pupils achieve well from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. Staff have put in place a range of initiatives to improve pupils' learning, especially in developing writing skills and these are resulting in raising attainment throughout the whole school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils work successfully in mixed-aged classes but there are occasions when assessment data is not used rigorously enough to ensure that work planned always matches all pupils' needs. Adults do not always challenge pupils enough through extending questioning in order to deepen their thinking nor do they consistently provide clear feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work in mathematics.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. They have very good attitudes to learning, are very proud of their school and their involvement in the community. They talk with enthusiasm about their rich outdoor area and have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body have successfully created a well-balanced community with high levels of respect among pupils and staff. The school makes very good use of its outdoor environment to enrich pupils' learning and extend their personal development, but there are missed opportunities to use it even more effectively and hence help raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. Leaders check the quality of teaching, manage performance and tackle areas for improvement well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics in order to raise attainment to above average by:
 - making better use of extended questioning to challenge pupils' thinking
 - providing clearer feedback in mathematics so that pupils always know how to improve their work and what the next steps are in their learning
 - using progress data more rigorously to ensure that work always matches the needs of all pupils.
- Make greater use of the school's immediate outdoor environment in order to help raise attainment further in English and mathematics.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

All groups of pupils, including those supported by school action plus, make good progress and achieve well. Parents and carers rightly feel that their children make good progress. Due to very small numbers in each year group, children's skills on entry to the Reception class can vary considerably from year to year, but knowledge of sounds and letters, writing and calculation are usually below age-related expectations. Children make good progress in their Reception Year as a result of effective teaching and exciting activities. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed working in their large outdoor tent where the teaching assistant had created a starry sky to help stimulate the children as they retold a recently read story. Children were keen to take turns as they discussed what happened. In choosing their next activity, based on the story, one child wrote what might happen next while others created and built space rockets or explored numbers.

Good progress is maintained through Key Stages 1 and 2 for all groups of pupils so that when they leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment is broadly average. Due to well-planned support, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. This is because of well-targeted intervention support during lessons, which encourages independent learning and enables them to make good progress.

The school makes very good use of learning opportunities gained by exploring further afield beyond its own environment. For example, during a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils were using data from a recent river excursion. They worked out averages of river measurements, as well as estimating data relevant to measurements further down the river. They worked well in pairs and small groups talking animatedly and challenging each other's thoughts.

Pupils show a keen interest in reading. They are eager to learn how to read and say they enjoy reading at home as well as at school. This interest is nurtured well alongside the school's regular teaching of letters and sounds resulting in average attainment in reading by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are keen to explore and have a go at new words. They are beginning to use punctuation well in their

reading, pausing at full stops and making changes in their voices when they see speech marks. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are fluent readers enjoying a wide range of reading material. They talk confidently about different authors and their personal preferences, not only for authors but also for different styles of books. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average but rising rapidly.

Quality of teaching

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching enables pupils of different abilities to make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well taught, often working with teaching assistants, and consequently also make good progress. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children are taught well. Pupils say that teachers help them to learn and make lessons fun. Strengths in teaching include the relationships throughout the school which have a positive impact on pupils' willingness to learn and the pace of lessons. All lessons observed displayed pupils' high levels of concentration as well as excellent behaviour ensuring that lessons run smoothly. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan creative projects. Lessons cater effectively for the different ages in the class but assessment data is not always used rigorously enough to enable work to be tailored to pupil's individual needs. Teachers monitor pupils' work well and provide additional support when needed but feedback in mathematics does not always help pupils to know how to improve their work or provide guidance for their next steps in learning. Teachers use questioning skills effectively in lessons to help check on pupils' understanding and tackle misunderstandings. However, questioning is not always rigorous enough to extend, develop and challenge pupils' thinking skills. Well-trained teaching assistants play an important role in lessons, mostly through working with either a single year group, small groups or individual pupils. They have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

There is a good emphasis on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A wide range of opportunities is provided for pupils to collaborate in small groups to deepen their understanding, share and challenge each other's ideas, as well as cooperate and resolve conflicts effectively. For example, during a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson a group of pupils worked well together to solve number problems. They had to answer questions to find out about the multiples of different numbers and to explore whether there was a pattern. There was much discussion and debate but eventually the pupils agreed. At the same time another group was consolidating previous work and the teacher was reinforcing the use of bar charts when gathering data. Pupils responded well to each other, they listened carefully and respected each other's input enabling good progress to be made.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is typically outstanding over time, and during the inspection this was observed in lessons and around school. Pupils say they always feel safe and always play harmoniously at break times. The school's outdoor environment provides pupils with a wide range of activities at break time from performing on the stage at the back of the wooden truck embedded in the ground to constructing models on the rocky playground. Pupils understand what constitute unsafe situations and are aware

of how to keep themselves safe not only at school but also when they are out and about or when they are using the internet. Pupils confirm that there is no bullying in school. They say that sometimes there is falling out but say that this is dealt with swiftly by any adult in school.

Pupils are extremely polite, considerate and enormously interested in all they do and what the school offers. They have a high respect for and value the opportunities the school provides for them not only a daily basis but also the many challenging activities in their outdoor curriculum. During the inspection they talked excitedly about the imminent whole-school camp and about the importance of caring for each other on such activities. Attendance is above average and this reflects pupils' high level of enjoyment of school and learning. Parents and carers are unanimous in agreeing that their children are safe in school and that behaviour gives no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school and the drive for improvement is shared by staff and the governing body. He has a very supportive approach and an open commitment to working as a team. The strong sense of teamwork among the staff enables responsibilities for leading different areas to be shared effectively. Accurate self-evaluation ensures that staff and the governing body are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this underpins the drive for improvement showing there is good capacity for securing improvement. For example, last year there was whole-school professional development to help raise pupils' attainment in writing and this has already had a positive impact. Performance management is rigorous and includes regular monitoring of lessons as well as pupils' books. Members of the governing body are actively involved in school. They are highly supportive and ensure that arrangements for safeguarding of pupils are robust and effective and meet statutory requirements.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work; their partnership with the school is very strong. They value the care the school provides for their children both during the school day and in the well-managed and safe after school club. The weekly Parent and Toddler group which takes place in the tent is well supported and helps to provide a good transition for children starting school. The school ensures that every pupil has an equal chance to learn and tackles any discrimination rigorously. Activities are planned to ensure that all groups of pupils make overall good progress.

The curriculum includes excellent use of the outdoor environment, including local and residential visits and exploration beyond the school grounds, to enrich pupils' personal development. However, there are missed opportunities to use the school's own environment regularly in English and mathematics to help raise attainment further. Pupils are able to meet and work with their friends in a partner school in Manchester and enjoy the opportunity to explore different styles of art and music with them. Provision in music and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well by staff, who present very positive role models for pupils.

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.



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langdale CofE School, Ambleside, LA22 9JE

Thank you to all of you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and watching you learn in lessons. It was wonderful to learn that you feel very safe in school and I was very impressed with your outdoor areas when some of you kindly took me round at break time. I thought your behaviour was outstanding in lessons and outside. I was also impressed with the way you all meet with your headteacher and teacher to discuss school activities and any changes you would like to make. I enjoyed watching you learn in lessons and was pleased to see how well you work in groups as well as by yourself and how sensibly you talk with each other when you are sharing ideas and thinking through problems. Overall, I found that your school provides you with a good education and the progress you make is also good.

There are four things that I have asked the school to do to help to make it even better: firstly, that teachers ask you more questions to challenge you even more; secondly, that teachers mark your work with a closer eye on adding comments to let you know what you need to learn next; thirdly, that teachers check information from all your assessments to make sure that all the work you do is always difficult enough; and lastly, that when planning English and mathematics lessons they make best use of your super outdoor areas.

Congratulations on all you do to help your school. I was really delighted that you said that you enjoy coming to school. Remember always to do your best and help your teachers and each other. Thank you for helping me and for being so polite.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey
Lead Inspector

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