

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BURLINGTON CE SCHOOL

Kirkby-in-Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112281

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Berry

Reporting inspector: Ian Knight
23031

Dates of inspection: 4 – 5 June 2001

Inspection number: 190819

Short inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Kirkby-in-Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA17 7UH
Telephone number:	01229 889210
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr F Wayles
Date of previous inspection:	November, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Burlington School is a small Voluntary Controlled Church of England school serving the village of Kirkby-in-Furness and the surrounding area of Cumbria. It caters for 87 pupils aged from four to eleven. Almost all pupils are European, with no pupils having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a special educational need is about average, as is the proportion with a statement of special need. An examination of the results of baseline testing of the children currently in reception indicates they started school with attainment that was a little above that expected nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well in all stages of their education and have very good attitudes and behaviour. Teaching is good, founded on a good curriculum, and supported by good leadership and management. Very effective community links ensure the school is at the heart of village life. The cost per pupil is within the average range for a small school and so the school offers good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils achieve well in the school because of good teaching.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well, which accelerates their learning.
- The school is closely involved in a two-way partnership with the local community.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The provision for the outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage is inadequate.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then, academic standards and the high quality of teaching have been maintained. Most of the key issues have been effectively addressed: assessment and marking policies have been devised and are in use; parents now receive regular information about forthcoming teaching; new staff are supported effectively through written guidelines, and sound provision has been made for pupils to understand the cultural diversity of society. Provision in reception has been improved following the formation of a separate reception class. However, the outdoor curriculum is still not part of the school's routine in reception and remains under-resourced in terms of large play equipment. Taken together, these judgements indicate that the school has made sound progress overall since its last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	B	A	C
mathematics	D	C	D	E
science	C	C	D	E

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

The above comparisons are now a year old, and are somewhat unreliable because of the small size of the year groups concerned. The 2000 results at the end of Key Stage 1 show high standards: standards were well above average in writing and mathematics and in the top five per cent of schools nationally in reading. When compared to similar schools, a similar picture is painted, except that mathematics was above average rather than well above. There are no tests in the other core subject of science, but teachers' assessments show very high standards again. Trends are unreliable due to the size of the groups. The small year groups make any calculation of trends unreliable. The school is making good progress towards meeting the challenging targets it has set. The standards of work seen confirm the test results in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, inspection evidence indicates improved standards in mathematics and science, and confirms high standards in English, especially in speaking and listening and writing. Standards in the Foundation Stage were above expectations in work seen. In a short inspection, judgements are not made about standards in other subjects, but judgements about attainment are made in each lesson observed. In over two thirds of lessons seen, including all lessons in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, standards were above what would usually be expected, confirming the high test standards noted above. When the observed standards are considered alongside other factors, for example the high turnover of pupils in the current Year 6 and the levels of challenge and application, then it is clear that pupils' achievement in the school overall is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard in lessons. They can become inattentive if introductions to lessons are too long.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This enables lessons to proceed at a good pace.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get along well, collaborate very well and are learning citizenship through, for example, the school council.
Attendance	Just above average.

In lessons, attitudes and behaviour were never judged less than satisfactory and were at least good in eighty-eight per cent of lessons, including over two-fifths that were very good or excellent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The teaching of both English and mathematics is good overall, leading to effective teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In the lessons seen, teaching was invariably at least satisfactory. It was at least good in 76 percent of lessons, which includes 35 per cent of lessons in which teaching was judged very good. Particular strengths in teaching include high expectations of behaviour and of how well pupils can work; planning for the wide range of abilities in the mixed age classes so that all pupils are challenged at the right level; a brisk pace to lessons, and teachers' own knowledge of both the subject matter and the needs of their pupils. These factors combine to motivate pupils as they try to solve problems. They apply themselves to the tasks in hand with a will. In a small number of satisfactory lessons, the pace was steady rather than brisk, or tasks were overambitious, so that learning was slower. The needs of all pupils are met well through the careful planning and high quality teaching in withdrawal groups for those needing it.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. However, the lack of a second adult in the reception class means that outdoor activities cannot be a routine part of the day for these children. The resources and outdoor play areas for these children do not allow for them to experience enough climbing, clambering and pedalling activities. The school recognises this and plans are in hand to improve the situation.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision enables these pupils to make good progress towards their own targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision overall. A particular strength is the school's provision for moral development so that all pupils understand right from wrong and why. Social development is also very good through charitable fund-raising, school responsibilities and the school council. There is good provision for pupils spiritual development through, for example, opportunities for reflection in assembly and circle time, and genuine gasps of awe were heard from reception children when salt 'disappeared' in a glass of water. However, planned opportunities for a spiritual response in lessons are under-developed. Following criticism at the last inspection, provision for pupils' cultural development is now sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Appropriate procedures are in place for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. A firm, but discreet, hand is on the tiller from the headteacher, who provides an educational vision that all staff share through the good teamwork in the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the school, but tends to rely too much on the headteacher to act fully as a critical friend. Some required sections of the Governors' Annual Report to Parents are absent.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Teaching is monitored closely and test results have been analysed to identify areas requiring further development.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. Generally satisfactory use of the premises overall. The playground remains a large empty space with minimal shade or play equipment, although plans are in hand to improve the situation here. Staff are deployed appropriately.

The school applies the principles of best value well in terms of purchases, but the idea of educational value for money is not yet well embedded in the school's thinking.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and behave well. • Teaching is good; their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework is inconsistent between classes. • The school does not work closely enough with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons is insufficiently wide. • The teaching of physical education is sporadic.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. They also agree that homework is not always used to best effect. The range of extra-curricular activities has been curtailed recently due to restrictions imposed to limit the spread of Foot and Mouth disease. The range of activities on offer is good, though those traditionally associated with girls are less well developed. The team found no evidence to support the parents' view that the school does not work closely enough with them or that the teaching of physical education is anything other than as timetabled; the timetabled provision is entirely satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve well in the school because of good teaching

1. Inspectors make judgements about academic standards in two ways. The first, attainment, relies on comparing how pupils do with an external benchmark. The second, achievement, involves weighing attainment against the context in which pupils work, the level of challenge they meet and the effort they need to put in, using prior attainment as a point of reference. Whilst the judgement of attainment is important, achievement is the real measure of how good a job a school is doing, and relies heavily on direct observations by inspectors of pupils at work and of the work completed.

2. Achievement in this school is good.

3. The school has recently been able to open a specialist reception class to cater for the needs of the young children in the Foundation Stage, prior to starting Key Stage 1. Generally, provision is good for these young learners, and the teaching observed was uniformly good, leading to good learning. It is a small class and the teacher knows them well. This enables her to plan activities with the needs of individuals in mind. While some lessons are appropriately formal to prepare children for the rigours of Key Stage 1, others involve a focus activity with the teacher and free-choice activities for the others, building on elements of children's personal, social and emotional development as they make choices and get along together. In all lessons, tasks are matched closely to individuals' needs, either through the provision of different tasks in more formal lessons, or by amending questions in the light of children's knowledge in the focused situation. These strategies, and the teacher's high expectations of what children can achieve, ensure that children are challenged at the right level and form one plank of good achievement. For example, in a literacy lesson, after discussing the story of a dog being washed, groups of children worked on matching phrases from the book to the appropriate illustration from a set given in a random order. The highest attainers also had to place the completed combinations in the correct order by cutting and sticking, whilst their peers, who worked more slowly, explained the correct order to the teacher. In this lesson, all achieved the objective of matching words to pictures and re-ordering, but also, all were appropriately challenged by the differing tasks. Consequently, behaviour management was invisible and children worked hard throughout the lesson, achieving well. Baseline assessments indicate that these children, overall, were slightly above average on entry to the school in the areas tested; the judgement of this inspection is that, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most children will be exceeding the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. This progress, coupled with the challenge seen in lessons and the independence which children demonstrated, confirm the view that good teaching is leading to good achievement in the Foundation Stage.

4. In Key Stage 1, good and very good teaching maintains the momentum in learning so that achievement continues to be high. Results in National Curriculum tests show high levels of attainment compared to all schools nationally and to those with a similar intake. However, these comparisons are of limited value because of the small size of each year group, in which small fluctuations year-on-year can make major differences to results. Nevertheless, an

analysis of the work completed by pupils currently in Year 2, together with evidence provided from the teacher's assessments and from work seen in lessons, confirms high attainment and good achievement. The principal reason for this is undoubtedly the good teaching that is well planned to stretch young minds to the limit. This was seen, for example, in a numeracy lesson. The teacher made good use of basic equipment like the 100-square to reinforce pupils' learning about sequences of numbers. This class, like most others in the school, includes pupils from two year-groups; the teacher's clear planning ensured that all pupils were challenged at their own level. During whole-class sections of the lesson, she directed questions carefully to nominated pupils; when pupils worked more independently, they had different work so that each year group received the right challenge. This had the effect of motivating pupils so that they worked hard; consequently they learned very well in this lesson.

5. Good teaching, learning and achievement continue into Key Stage 2. Recent National Curriculum test results have been disappointing in terms of their comparison with national averages, but, again, these comparisons are not always meaningful in groups of 15 or fewer. Nevertheless, analyses of completed work, including some outstanding writing from another's viewpoint in the Year 5/6 class, as well as an examination of teachers' own assessments, and inspectors' observations in class, confirm that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now at least in line with those expected nationally. This appears to be a decline from the strong position already reported at the end of Key Stage 1. However, the variation in groups of pupils becomes very significant with small cohorts, and this has been compounded in the current Year 6 where almost half of the group arrived in the school after the usual starting point. This affects attainment, but the judgement about achievement transcends this as it also takes into account the demands placed on pupils and this final piece of the jigsaw confirms the judgement that, throughout Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well because of good teaching.

6. One significant factor in Key Stage 2 pupils' achievement is the high expectations seen in lessons. Pupils are set very challenging tasks, which they attack with vigour and, usually, success. This was seen in a numeracy lesson for Years 3 and 4. This lesson focused on problem solving and pupils were set very challenging problems – variations on 'magic squares' where numbers need to be placed in shapes so that those connected by lines have the same total. The work here was again well planned to cater for both age groups with significantly more challenging puzzles for the older group. This task was not appropriate for a few of the younger, weaker pupils and they had an alternative times-tables task that challenged them. The teacher's evident enthusiasm communicated itself to the pupils who were very excited about the activity and really fired with enthusiasm. The teacher circulated round the class very effectively, giving hints, help and encouragement, whilst skilfully avoiding actually doing the problem for them. The effect of this very good teaching was that all pupils made really good progress, worked hard, and learned very well, contributing to their good achievement over time. This high quality of challenge is not restricted to the core subjects of English and mathematics, although these were naturally a focus of the inspection. For example, in an outdoor cricket lesson for Years 5 and 6, the skills of throwing and catching were reinforced well. This was because the teacher had good knowledge of the subject and of how to maximise pupils' progress. He demonstrated and explained techniques well, and gave a great deal of useful individual guidance to pupils. The pupils, in turn, showed good levels of improvement in the lesson, with high standards of skills evident from both sexes.

7. Of course, not all pupils are naturally quick learners. Those who are not are effectively identified by the school and receive good support. This sometimes takes the form of withdrawal from sections of literacy or numeracy lessons for concentrated tuition on the basic

skills. One such literacy session was observed for pupils in Year 5. The quality of relationships between the learning assistant leading the lesson and the small group of pupils meant that respect was mutual and the lesson proceeded at a great pace. The activities were well planned and delivered, with good use made of worksheets and individual whiteboards. The basic skills of phonics were well taught: for example, when sounding out words, the learning assistant pronounced 'f' as 'ffffff', rather than 'f-uh', so that pupils could smoothly blend the sounds together. Although their attainment in the lesson was below what would usually be expected of pupils of that age, the group made very good progress, learned very well, and consequently, taking their needs into account, achieved well.

Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well, which accelerates their learning

8. Major factors that bear on the good teaching and achievement outlined above are the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. Clearly, this is a two-way street, and attitudes will also depend in strong measure on the teaching in any particular lesson. Nevertheless, when pupils arrive in the classroom ready and eager to learn, then learning takes place more effectively. In every lesson visited, inspectors make judgements about the quality of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Inspectors never judged that attitudes and behaviour fell below the standard expected. They judged pupils to have good attitudes and behaviour, or better, in nearly nine lessons out of ten, including over two-fifths in which they were judged very good or excellent. An obvious and immediate consequence of this level of attitudes is that teachers need to expend minimal effort in maintaining order and can, therefore, concentrate on the real matter in hand. This means that most classrooms have an air of excitement about them that inspires pupils and teachers alike to give of their best. The result is that pupils' learning in lessons is significantly enhanced. However, there can be a downside to such levels of enthusiasm. Occasionally, younger pupils will call out in their eagerness to answer questions or offer opinions.

9. The youngest children in the school develop independence well. This is promoted by the free-choice activities on offer in many lessons, in which those children who are not part of the teacher's focused group choose associated activities. They understand class rules, for example, how many are allowed in the role-play area at any one time, and get along with few disputes. These children obtain great pleasure from their time in reception, each day being a voyage of exploration. For example, children were spellbound by the variety of different types of shell they examined as part of their topic on the seaside. They enjoyed using magnifying glasses to study the shells as they drew good observational drawings. There were real gasps of awe in another lesson when salt dissolved in a glass of water. Children were amazed: 'Look! It's disappeared!' and vied with one another to describe how it would appear after being left in a warm place for a day or so.

10. This continues in Key Stage 1, although occasionally some groups of pupils call out in their excitement and need reminding of class rules about taking turns and waiting to be asked. Nevertheless, all of the class participate well, including pointing out that the teacher had omitted a capital letter from the beginning of a sentence! The teacher's generosity with encouragement and praise ensured that pupils did learn well in these lessons.

11. In Key Stage 2, lessons are often very exciting for pupils. This happened in a lesson for Years 3 and 4 introducing orienteering. The pupils were learning about the conventions of map-making. One activity, to demonstrate the importance of accuracy, required pupils to set

the hall out according to a given plan, placing bean bags, cones and benches appropriately. This novel approach to the use of maps was exciting for pupils who set to with a will, really enjoying the challenging activity. They worked in teams to do sections of the hall and collaborated well, with no evidence of conflict in the groups. Back in class, pupils enthusiastically took part in a discussion about exactly what they might include in a plan of the classroom, and how they could represent objects as seen in a bird's-eye view.

The school is closely involved in a two-way partnership with the local community

12. As a small village school, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that the school sees itself as being at the heart of village life. However, there is a more concrete relationship through the provision in the school of the 'CREDITS Centre', which consists of a suite of networked computers, shared by the school and adult education. A number of worthwhile courses for local people are run in the suite, which is managed by the school. It is also used for the teaching of information and communication technology in the school. One particularly beneficial aspect of the partnership was observed in a numeracy lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4. A small group was led by a community tutor in the suite. She had been one of the first villagers to take one of the courses on offer, part of which involved her producing a computer presentation on times-tables, which she now uses with those pupils who might benefit, thus directly benefiting the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision for the outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage is inadequate.

13. Good practice in the Foundation Stage includes regular opportunities for children to work outdoors, possibly as one of a group of self-chosen activities, to allow them to use large play equipment like climbing frames, wheeled toys, balance beams and so on to build confidence in climbing, balancing, clambering and pedalling. However, the school is not yet offering the full complement of such activities. Plans are in hand, however, to improve provision. At the moment, outdoor activities cannot be routinely offered as part of a 'package' of activities because there is only one adult with reception and outdoor activities would need at least a second to supervise. Plans include improving the staffing situation in this area. Consequently, such activities have to take place for all children at once. In addition, the playground area is open with little in the way of markings, climbing frames or large toys, so the area of physical development can only take place indoors in the hall. This means that some important aspects of early learning cannot take place as effectively as they should. The school has, however, identified playground provision as an area for development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

14. In order to improve further the provision in this effective school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- take steps to improve the quality of the outdoor curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

The school is already aware of this and plans are in hand to improve matters.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	6

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	35	41	24	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	87
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	5	10	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	8	6	6
	Total	11	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (69)	60 (69)	67 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	8	6	6
	Total	11	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (69)	67 (69)	67 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

The results for Key Stage 1 are not published here as the group size was too small for comparisons to be statistically significant.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	76
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	22

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	183849.00
Total expenditure	170634.00
Expenditure per pupil	1962.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	0.00
Balance carried forward to next year	13215.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	87
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	53	4	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	28	60	10	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	61	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	47	19	11	9
The teaching is good.	40	52	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	44	16	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	42	5	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	51	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	47	23	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	50	10	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	55	5	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	38	25	20	7