



St Bridget's C of E School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112296
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278894
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005
Reporting inspector Alastair Younger

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Parton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Whitehaven, Cumbria
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01946 852654
Number on roll	59	Fax number	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend Andrew Edwards
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Highton

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	17 October 2005 - 18 October 2005	278894

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 in an area of considerable social and economic deprivation. Much higher than average numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals and more than average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is usually very low, as is pupils' personal and social development. There are 59 pupils on roll, nine of them in a recently opened nursery class.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school sees itself as good and as having an outstanding ethos. This view is supported by the inspection. The school works within its budget, has improved since the last inspection, and is well placed to continue improving because it has an outstanding headteacher, happy, dedicated and experienced staff and an outstanding curriculum. These all contribute to the school giving good value for money.

Most pupils enter school in the Foundation Stage, and many have weak learning and social skills when they arrive. They make good progress in their learning and outstanding advances in their personal and social skills thanks to good teaching and care. This good progress continues throughout their time in the school, although some work does not meet all of the pupils' individual needs. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 6, pupils are ready for transfer to secondary school and have reached standards very close to the national average.

The headteacher and staff have created a school which carefully balances academic learning and personal, social and health education. The school has a very high standing in the community, but its governing body is not sufficiently involved in school improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers vary tasks and expectations to more accurately reflect individual learning needs.
- Involve the governing body more in monitoring standards and setting the agenda for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. This is exactly as the school judges. From a very low starting point, pupils in the Foundation Stage are meeting most of their goals and by the end of Year 2 about two-thirds of pupils are reaching the nationally expected level. By the end of Year 6 this has risen to well over three-quarters. In mathematics and science, almost half of pupils are exceeding national expectations by the end of Year 6. In English the figure is closer to a quarter, reflecting the pupils' low starting point. However, last year all pupils in Year 6 exceeded the targets set for them at the end of Year 2 for English, mathematics and science. Progress is slow in some lessons where the work does not meet all of the pupils' needs. Nevertheless there is no group of pupils who noticeably underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The evidence of inspection strongly supports the school's view that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Parents are unanimous in their praise of this part of the school's work. Pupils love coming to school. They have no fears of any form of bullying. Most pupils' attendance is very good. Overall, however, attendance is only satisfactory because a few pupils are away because their parents take them on holiday during term time. The school does everything it can to discourage this. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual development is strongly promoted through celebration and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and other's lives. Behaviour is good. Pupils are sometimes loud and energetic at breaktimes, but unfailingly polite and welcoming to visitors and hard working in class. Their cultural development is exceptional. It is greatly helped by an extensive programme of visits and visitors. Pupils also relish the huge range of sporting activities that are provided. The school produces its own school dinners, with a strong emphasis on good, healthy food. Virtually all pupils eat the school meals and they love them. Pupils show an awareness of the importance of helping others to enjoy themselves, for instance by entertaining villagers through concerts and coffee mornings and by taking an active part in celebrations and services in the local church.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. This is as the school evaluates it. Teachers have great success in promoting pupils' personal development alongside their learning. They do this through very successfully encouraging good behaviour and by setting a very high standard through their own actions. Throughout the school, teachers make learning interesting and fun. They have great skill in weaving different subjects together, for instance, in a mathematics lesson which also promoted pupils' reading, speaking and listening. In the Foundation Stage, teachers, together with highly experienced and effective teaching assistants, do work which is good and occasionally outstanding. Tremendous skill in managing the wide age and ability range is clearly evident. Planning is exceptionally thorough, identifying individuals who need extra help or who can work more independently. Tasks are usually varied so as to challenge higher attaining pupils without neglecting lower attaining ones. This is not always the case in Years 3 to 6 where some of the work does not meet the pupils' different learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This is outstanding. It is better than the school judges, mainly because of the broad and innovative range of enrichment activities. There is an emphasis on promoting basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills which strongly supports pupils' future economic

well-being. Learning these skills is a high priority in all lessons, not just English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Curriculum planning is exceptionally good and promotes the good progress pupils make. No subjects are neglected and pupils receive a wonderfully rich diet of learning experiences. The enrichment of the curriculum takes place through a multitude of trips and a stimulating range of visitors. Once a year, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 are involved in a residential trip. These trips are carefully planned to broaden pupils' outlooks and to visit places they would not otherwise see. They also see plays and pantomimes and are involved in music festivals, such as the Keswick Jazz Festival. They meet with considerable success in sporting competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all of its pupils. Child protection procedures are thorough and there is high quality risk assessment of activities to reduce the chance of accidents. Learning difficulties are quickly identified and, where necessary, extra support is provided. These pupils have individual education plans but they are of only average quality and not much used by teachers to plan for improvements in learning because the targets that are identified are too broad and review of the plans is infrequent. This is effectively compensated for by the fact that all pupils have individual targets in their personal files, which are more perceptive and reviewed more frequently. A recent, and very thorough, check of the school's health and safety procedures made several suggestions for improvements. The school is acting quickly on these recommendations.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is outstandingly well led by the headteacher. Management by the headteacher and staff is good. Governance is satisfactory, weakened by the low involvement that governors have in making suggestions for improvement and initiating action to bring it about. The school rightly feels that leadership and management are good overall.

For the past four years, standards have improved. This is largely due to the headteacher's initiatives which have removed identified weaknesses. The school knows itself and the community well. Led by the headteacher, all staff share an exceptional desire to get the best out of pupils. All staff contribute to the good checking of pupils' progress and to the evaluation of the school's work. Parents and pupils' views are also taken into account. Staff receive the training they need and work as a close-knit team. Morale is exceptionally high. This combination is creating a school that pupils are keen to attend and where they work with as much enthusiasm as the staff.

Governors are increasingly visiting the school to help out and becoming more involved in training initiatives, such as racial awareness training and preparation for the new inspection process. These are all welcome developments which bode well for the future. Nevertheless, just as at the time of the previous inspection, the governing body is still

relying too heavily on the headteacher to keep it informed about standards in the school.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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17th October 2005

Dear pupils

What a lovely school you go to. Thanks for making me so welcome when I visited the other day.

The good news is that you seem to be getting on well. I think this is because your teachers are so good, but however good they are it's you who are doing the learning. I like the way you work so hard and obviously enjoy finding out new and interesting things. You also play hard, but fair. I loved the way you looked after each other and how considerate you older pupils are to the little ones in the nursery and reception. I won't forget the amazing range of activities you all get involved in, not just in the classroom, but also on these fantastic trips you go on. Of course, this is all made possible by the headteacher and her staff. Mrs Highton is an exceptional headteacher.

There are only a couple of things needed to make the school even better. One of these is that in a very few lessons some of you seem to find the work either too hard or too easy and I feel that if your teachers could work out a way to make sure that it was just right for each of you they could make you work even harder. You probably won't thank me for that. The other thing I'm suggesting is that the school governors get more involved; perhaps you could help by inviting them in to talk about school life and asking them what they would like to see happening in school.

Good luck to you all. I'll be keeping an eye out for some of you in the Challenge Cup Final 2018.

All the best

Alastair Younger (Lead Inspector)

Annex B