



St Matthew's C of E School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112308
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278898
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Allison

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Westnewton
School category	Voluntary aided		Wigton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cumbria, CA7 3NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01697 320545
Number on roll	45	Fax number	01697 320545
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Debbie Johnson
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr David Cornwall

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 6 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	Inspection number 278898
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small primary school with a decreasing number of pupils on roll. The school serves a mainly rural area, but about 40% of the pupils come from a nearby small town. The number of pupils in each year group ranges from 4 to 11. There are almost twice as many boys as girls. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few looked after children. The pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are taught in one mixed-age class. Those in Key Stage 2 are taught in two classes in the morning and one in the afternoon. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are very similar to most schools but the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools and increasing. The overall attainment on entry fluctuates, from just below average to well below average, with personal development and language skills being weakest.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. It gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave the school. Their personal development is good and contributes to their satisfactory progress in lessons. The school provides good levels of care, guidance and support for all pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. The school's own assessment of its effectiveness is accurate. Most of the previously identified shortcomings have been tackled successfully. The headteacher knows what needs to be done to raise standards and the school has the capacity to improve further.

It is a welcoming school. The pupils are friendly and talk enthusiastically about what the school provides. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to improve provision. Parents have every confidence in the school.

Comparing the performance of pupils in this school with those nationally is unsafe because of the small number of pupils in each year group and the fluctuation in their attainment on entry. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and this year children have made good progress to reach standards just below those expected for their age. Progress is satisfactory through Key Stages 1 and 2. This year the school has reached its challenging targets in the Year 6 national tests. All pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory with a good range of enriching experiences. However, there is too little planned provision to practise and extend pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills in subjects other than English, and too little emphasis on mental and problem solving skills in mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and some of it is good. However, pupils do not receive enough guidance, through marking and refined individual target setting, on what they have to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by providing more opportunities to develop speaking, listening and writing in subjects other than English.
- Raise standards in mathematics by promoting pupils' mental mathematics and problem solving.
- Improve marking and refine target setting so that individual pupils are given better guidance on what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average and the pupils make satisfactory progress. Comparing the performance of pupils in the national tests with national data is unsafe because of the small number of pupils in each year group.

For example, this year, there are only four pupils in Year 6. The school sets challenging targets for its results in these tests and this year they are likely to be met. The school is thorough in its analysis of data from test results and uses the resulting information to take steps to raise standards. Children in the Reception class this year have made good progress. They have attained standards that are just below those expected for their age and in personal development standards are similar to those expected nationally for children of their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children make similar progress to other pupils because they are given good help.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of all pupils are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory. They behave well and enjoy school and their work. This is reflected in the good attendance of most pupils, although attendance is only satisfactory overall. The older pupils have a growing maturity and independence that helps prepare them for life outside of school. Pupils have a positive attitude to staying healthy through exercise and a sensible diet and say that they really enjoy sports and playtimes. They know how to be safe from dangers and to make sensible choices about lifestyles as young adults. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community. They are proud to be given jobs, for example as 'junior play leaders', or as members of the school council. They are pleased that they have a say about issues that are important, such as the new quiet area in the playground. They behave well, have a well-formed sense of right and wrong, and respect the views of others. This tolerance is one of the main reasons why bullying is rare. Pupils also respect other cultures and religions. They eagerly organise and participate in fundraising, such as 'Jeans for Genes', to help those less fortunate than themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and there is some good teaching. The teachers manage learning in the mixed-age classes effectively by planning work to meet individual needs. All teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and promote learning, for example when pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 were learning to read bus timetables. Similarly, all teachers expect high standards of behaviour and this contributes to pupils' satisfactory progress. Another feature of the teaching is the use of questioning to check on pupils' learning so that subsequent lessons build on what pupils know or can do. This questioning also helps pupils to know what they have learned. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties. The pace of lessons is sometimes, but not consistently, brisk. Marking is satisfactory and helps pupils to know what they have learned, but there is insufficient guidance on what

pupils need to do to improve. Planning is satisfactory, but there are not enough opportunities, a fact already recognised by the school and being addressed, to plan more opportunities for speaking, listening and writing in other subjects to help raise attainment in English and for problem solving to raise standards in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It fulfils all statutory requirements. It meets the needs of all children, including those in the Foundation Stage, although the opportunities for outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage are restricted. The emphasis on personal development from the day they start school is a good foundation on which the school is building in its drive to raise standards. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of visitors and outings, including a residential experience for older pupils. In extending sports skills, the school uses outside experts to the benefit of the pupils. Another feature of the enrichment is the opportunity for those who are gifted or talented to attend twilight sessions at a secondary school. The current revision of the curriculum is intended to provide the necessary increase in opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking, listening and writing skills in other subjects and for additional opportunities to promote mental and problem solving skills in mathematics. The curriculum helps to prepare all pupils satisfactorily for life as young adults.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for all pupils. There are good procedures to ensure that staff and pupils are safe. The pupils say that, if they have any worries, they will be taken seriously. They are confident about asking for help when they need it. Child protection systems are sound.

All pupils make very good progress in their personal development and those who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good help and support, as do those who are gifted or talented. Pupils have individual targets. However, like the marking of pupils' work, target setting does not yet provide the pupils with the help they need to know what they have to do to improve. The school is refining individual target setting to deal with this. The partnership with parents and outside agencies is strong. The school enables parents, particularly those whose children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to support their children's learning at home well. Parents are supportive of what the school does for their children. One parent wrote, 'I am very impressed with the school as they give their all to every pupil regardless of ability.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Under the clear guidance of the headteacher all staff share a determination to raise standards. A reduction in the

number of classes because of falling rolls has been planned, with careful financial management by the governing body, to reduce the teaching commitment of the headteacher and so enable him to check more closely on teaching and learning. The headteacher's careful analysis of the school's effectiveness is accurate and he knows what needs to be done for the school to capitalise on pupils' good personal development and drive up standards. To further this, the school is participating in two national initiatives, the Primary Leadership Strategy and, from September, Assessment for Learning. Thorough analysis of pupils' performance in the national tests in 2005 identified where the curriculum and teaching needed to be strengthened. As a result, the progress of all pupils is satisfactory and the school reached its challenging targets this year. The school promotes equal opportunities well and deploys teachers and teaching assistants to help raise achievement.

The shortcomings identified by the previous inspection have been tackled, though standards in writing are not as high as the school would like them to be or should be. Strategies are being implemented to deal with this.

The governors know the school well. There are a number of new governors and the chair of governors has arranged for training that will enable all governors to play a fuller part in monitoring the effectiveness of the school. Systems for self-evaluation are well established and take account of the views of parents and pupils. The school has the capacity to improve further.

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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?	3	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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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To the pupils of:

St Matthew's C of E School

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Cumbria

CA7 3NT

8 July 2006

Dear Pupils

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. I was impressed by your friendliness, politeness and your good behaviour. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons.

I can see why you are proud of your school and enjoy attending.

You enjoy learning, settle to your work quickly and behave well in class and in the playground.

You are proud to take on responsibilities and, through the school council, put forward suggestions that make the school better.

You enjoy taking part in extra activities.

Your teachers and other adults in the school work hard to help you.

Your headteacher knows what the school should do to help you to do better and the other staff fully support him in this.

As a result of what I saw and what you said to me, there are three things I have asked the school to do to make it better.

Give you lots of opportunities to practise and improve your speaking, listening and writing in all subjects, to help you to do better in English.

Make sure that the tasks you are given in mathematics will help you to be better at working things out in your head and solving problems

Help you to have a clearer idea of what you have to do to improve by more helpful comments when marking your work and helping you to be clearer about your individual targets.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison

Lead inspector