



St Oswald's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112314
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278901
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Howgill Close
School category	Community		Burnside
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Kendal, Cumbria
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01539 773637
Number on roll	119	Fax number	01539 773638
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Nigel Davies
Date of previous inspection	1 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr James Douglas

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 7 February 2006 - 8 February 2006	Inspection number 278901
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

St Oswald's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school situated in the village of Burnside, just outside the market town of Kendal. Most children live in rented accommodation. The children's skills on entry to the school are below average for their age. The majority of children are of white British background. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with statements of their special educational needs is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and provides satisfactory value for money. The inspector finds that this is a satisfactory school with some good features. This is because leadership, management and teaching are satisfactory rather than good. The children make satisfactory overall progress. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English and average in science and mathematics. The teaching of mathematics is not as good as in English and the more able children, in particular, could do better. The marking of children's work does not give the children enough help to improve. On the other hand, children with learning difficulties make good progress because they are well taught. The provision for the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is satisfactory and the Reception children make satisfactory progress from a low starting point although most of them do not achieve the standards expected of children of this age. The school is very welcoming, with a strong Christian ethos, and the children are a pleasure to know. The children's personal development is good, the curriculum is of a good quality and children are well cared for. The school has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. In particular, standards in English have improved well, and the school demonstrates the capacity to make the further improvements necessary.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that all children, especially higher attainers, learn to use their basic skills of arithmetic more effectively to solve mathematical problems.
- Ensure that teachers give the children pointers for improvement when marking children's work in order to show them how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's overall achievement is satisfactory. The children make satisfactory progress and reach average overall standards at the end of Year 6. Most children enter the school with skills below those expected for their age. Although they make satisfactory progress, most of them still do not reach expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. The children continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. The targets set for Year 6 are challenging but attainable. In 2005, the school met the targets for English and science but did not meet the mathematics target. By Year 6, overall standards are again average. They are above average in English and average in science and mathematics. The school's results were better in each subject in 2005 than in the previous year and there has been a sustained improvement in English over the past three years. Although children make satisfactory progress in mathematics, the teachers should have higher expectations of them. In mathematics, the children, especially the more able ones, do not use their

mental skills quickly enough when solving problems. On the other hand, the children apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in other subjects, such as art and design and in technology. Children with learning difficulties achieve well against the targets set for them. Children achieve exceptionally well in art and design due to the high quality of teaching. The artwork on display is of a remarkably high standard for the age of the children.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Children like school and enjoy playing an active part in decision-making. One child commented: 'It's good because it's kids' choices and the grown-ups don't make all the decisions.' Children have good attitudes to their work, are keen to succeed and their behaviour is good. Children are polite and friendly with adults and get on well with each other. Attendance is now satisfactory, showing a good improvement since the last inspection. Children come to school on time and are punctual to lessons. The school does a good job of making sure that children are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and physical exercise, and know how to keep safe. Children are proud of the contribution the school's council makes to the running of the school. The council has its own budget to spend on improvements, for example, to the apparatus in the playground. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of their own and other cultures and are sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of others. They willingly take on responsibilities when asked to do so, for example, organising fund-raising for charitable causes. Children make a good contribution to the local community. They take part in school productions performed for local people, church activities and other events, and have a good awareness of the community outside school. The children develop their basic skills to a level which gives them a satisfactory basis for their future education and employment. Their literacy skills are well developed. Although they could be quicker with their arithmetic their mathematical knowledge supports their work effectively in other subjects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are some good features and also some things to improve. The positive relationships and the teachers' promotion of the children's personal development are particular strengths. In the best lessons, teachers plan a variety of interesting and challenging activities that keep children interested and really make them think. In Year 6, the outcome of this approach is evident in the good quality of children's writing. Exciting topic work is also a good feature of teaching. For example, children took great pride in explaining the work they had done to make a model of their village. This work enabled the children to apply their manual skills in design and technology, and also their historical, geographical

and mathematical knowledge. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well because of the good help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. However, at present, the work does not consistently challenge all children, especially higher attainers, to practise and apply their basic mathematical skills effectively enough to solve problems. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers could make better use of the outdoor play area. Children's work is marked regularly, but some teachers do not provide enough written comments to explain to children what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. The curriculum is particularly well planned for art and design and for developing the children's writing skills in Year 6. Children can also learn to play orchestral instruments. The curricular provision for children with learning difficulties is also good. However, the school does not place enough emphasis in its planning on the application of arithmetic to solving problems in mathematics. The curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but the outside area is unattractive and teachers do not plan for it to be used effectively enough. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and successfully promotes an understanding of staying safe, keeping healthy, and of citizenship. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits and by, for example, visiting artists. Parents are pleased with the range of curriculum opportunities the children receive, with one parent rightly commenting that 'St Oswald's is a wonderful little community school that manages to deliver the National Curriculum brilliantly without sacrificing the all-important creative arts.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of the school's provision for the children's care, guidance and support is good. Parents are fully involved in their child's education and say that this is a caring school. The school shows a strong concern for children's welfare and safety; all staff know and follow the school's child protection procedures. Health and safety procedures are effective and rigorous risk assessments are in place. A good programme for health education ensures that children know how to stay fit and learn why substances such as tobacco and alcohol are dangerous. The school closely monitors children's academic and social progress and passes on this information to parents in reports. The school identifies children with learning difficulties or disabilities as early as possible. Induction arrangements for children starting school are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. There are some strengths. The headteacher ensures that the school's ethos is one in which everyone feels valued,

cared for, respected and included in all that the school does. The school has good systems for seeking the views of parents and children. The strong focus on inclusion has meant that children excluded from other schools are successfully integrated and can make a fresh start. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body discharges its responsibilities effectively, supports the headteacher, and governors are fully involved in decision-making.

The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is too generous and should be more critical. The school has correctly identified standards in English as a focus for improvement and, as a result, standards in the subject have risen consistently over the past three years. However, standards in mathematics have risen less strongly. The reason for this is that teaching is less effective in mathematics than English, especially in respect of the application of basic skills. Also, the teachers' marking of children's work could be improved.

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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	2	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	2	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?	2	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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St Oswald's C of E Primary School

Howgill Close

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8 February 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for helping me during the inspection. I would like to tell you about my findings. You will not be surprised to know that I found many good things out about your school. The artwork you do is some of the best I have seen. I enjoyed being in your school, watching you learn, hearing you sing and talking to you. The list below shows some of the things I liked about your school.

You work hard.

The school's council members past and present enjoy having a say in what goes on in your school.

By the time you leave you learn to read and use your writing skills well and that will help you to get a good job in the future.

You like your headteacher, teachers and other members of staff and the way they make learning exciting.

Teachers expect you to behave well and work hard. All the adults in school work very hard to care for you.

You enjoy the visits you make to different places and the clubs after school.

We have asked your teachers to look at two things to make your work even better.

To make sure that when they mark your work teachers help you improve further by writing comments on your work about what to do better.

To provide you with more challenging opportunities to use your number skills in solving mathematical problems.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector