



Castle Carrock School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112422
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278928
Inspection dates 15 June 2006 to 16 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Christine Graham HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Castle Carrock
School category	Foundation		Brampton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Cumbria, CA8 9LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01228 670393
Number on roll	111	Fax number	01228 670139
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nigel Gammage
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Chris Marsh

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	15 June 2006 - 16 June 2006	278928

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a smaller than average primary school. There are four mixed-age classes. The school has become increasingly popular in recent years and more than half of the pupils travel to school by bus or car from the surrounding villages. This can limit the involvement of pupils in extra-curricular activities and makes day to day contact with parents more difficult. The school serves an affluent rural community. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than that found nationally. There is a breakfast club, after-school care and holiday provision.

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 education for pupils. This is not as good as the school's self-evaluation which was too generous. Teaching is satisfactory, although within this there is some teaching which is good, and all teaching has some strengths. The education provided for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. Children start school able to do about the same as most children of their age, although some children can do more than this. They make good progress with all aspects of their education during their time in the early years unit. Many pupils enter Key Stage 1 already reaching the levels expected of much older pupils. This progress is maintained during Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of this key stage are high.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. By the end of this key stage most pupils achieve at least the nationally expected Level 4, with a good proportion achieving Level 5 in mathematics, reading and science. Very few pupils achieve Level 5 in English because writing skills are not taught systematically enough. The school is taking action to address this. The improved use of assessment information identifies the underachievement of individuals. However, the guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work is not always good enough and marking does not correct inaccuracies in grammar and punctuation. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils and sometimes better because of the effective support they receive.

The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. The school has effective partnerships with other schools, parents and the community. The senior teacher has a good understanding of what must be improved, but subject leadership is not yet strong enough to bring about the improvements needed. Governors bring a range of personal and professional skills to their role and are increasingly effective in monitoring the work of the school.

Parents value the work of the school and feel that they are kept well informed. Personal development is good. The school has a family atmosphere. The attendance of pupils is good and pupils say they enjoy school. Much has been improved since the last inspection. There is capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make all teaching as good as the best.
- Teach writing skills systematically in order to improve presentation, punctuation and grammar.
- Ensure that work is accurately matched to the ability of individual pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure marking tells pupils what has been achieved, what must be improved and how to do it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of their time in school. This judgement is not as positive as that of the school, but it confirms the judgement of the local authority. When children start Nursery some have the skills and knowledge which are typical of their age but some can do much more than this. Because of the good teaching and provision they receive, they make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. Most exceed the goals set for their learning and by the end of the Reception Year are achieving at least Level 1 of the National Curriculum, with some achieving more than this. This progress is maintained in Key Stage 1 and the majority of pupils attain high standards by the end of Year 2. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in mathematics and science which are above those achieved nationally. While earlier high standards in reading are maintained, pupils' progress in writing is less good with very few pupils achieving Level 5 and some pupils failing to achieve Level 4 by one or two marks. This is because writing skills are not yet taught systematically. Handwriting and presentation are careless, the use of punctuation is weak and many pupils fail to use capital letters appropriately. Pupils enjoy writing stories and use interesting and very descriptive language. But evidence from the inspection shows that not enough time is spent, in some year groups, on extending pupils' knowledge of other forms of writing. The targets set for pupils in national tests in English in 2005 were not met. In some classes work is not matched well enough to the needs of individual learners and marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and sometimes better than this because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school has a family-like atmosphere. All pupils are known to staff and, as a result, small problems or difficulties are dealt with quickly. There are good relationships with parents, promoted by frequent newsletters and the school website. This means that parents who are not able to visit school on a daily basis are kept well informed. Most pupils love coming to school. This is seen in their very good attendance and good behaviour. Many pupils are mature and responsible. They are sensitive to the needs of others and ready to help other pupils or their teachers. They have very healthy lifestyles; they eat sensibly and know how to keep safe and well. The school kitchen encourages pupils to bring in fruit in season; this is used to make puddings for school lunch and in this way pupils learn how to make the most of seasonal produce. The school is very much part of the community and pupils are involved in many village activities. Pupils make decisions about school events and are consulted when appropriate. As a result, they are well informed and explain their views clearly and well. Pupils in Key Stage 2 get frequent opportunities to work with pupils from other schools and extend their learning outside of the classroom. Recent visitors have

included a Sikh speaker, and pupils work with partner schools in Tanzania, Ireland and Holland.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, although within this there is some which is good and all teaching has some strengths. All teachers have good subject knowledge. Explanations are clear and good use is made of whiteboards. Where teaching is good, work is well matched to the needs of individuals and all pupils make good progress during the lesson. Teachers work with small groups to ensure they gain maximum benefit from the lesson and questions are carefully judged in order that all pupils can participate. In these classes expectations are high. Pupils receive reminders to check their work and are told to correct mistakes. The marking of pupils' work, in some classes, does not yet give pupils accurate feedback on what they have achieved, what they must do to improve and how to do it. The school has started to involve pupils in assessing their own work. This is at an early stage and is not yet consistently in place across the school. The school is aware that further support is needed in order to ensure that all teaching is consistently good. Teaching assistants are very effective. They provide good support to pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has been improved this year. Two afternoons a week see all the pupils working in cross-phase, mixed-age groups. This provides very effective learning and development in personal and social skills, history, geography, science and English. Classrooms and the outdoor area are used to the full, and older pupils get the chance to experience the types of developmental activities they need. Pupils see this type of learning as fun. This work helps prepare them for moving to a new class and working with different people. Pupils experience role play, music and art in exciting and energetic ways, and this would be much more difficult to achieve in a single classroom. The curriculum at Key Stage 2 is being similarly enhanced, although the development of this is at an early stage. The school has good resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and most pupils are skilled at using interactive whiteboards. Music is a strength of the school. About a fifth of all pupils learn an instrument, and singing is of a very high standard because it is well taught. All pupils benefit from the many visits, events and visitors the school provides. There are residential visits for older pupils, and pupils in Reception made good use of a walk around the village when writing information booklets. There is a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities and pupils have opportunities to compete in sporting events. In Key Stage 2, only a very small proportion of pupils do not attend any activities at all.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils are well cared for and all the arrangements to safeguard them are in place. Relationships within the school are good. Some pupils who find it more difficult to manage their behaviour are tactfully guided so that they can remain in lessons and benefit from learning. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and effective arrangements are made for pupils who require additional support. The size of the school is a very positive force in promoting confidence, self-esteem and caring relationships. Pupils feel well supported and all feel that incidents are dealt with quickly. The improving use of assessment means that any underachievement is being identified. However, in some classes pupils do not receive enough guidance on how to improve their work and work is not always matched well enough to meet the needs of individual learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Much has been achieved in recent years. Partnerships with parents have been strengthened and the building has been improved and extended. The school correctly identified the dip in progress in Key Stage 2 and has put in place measures to identify underachievement. The school's self-evaluation erred on the positive side but was accurate in its identification of strengths and areas for development. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that the appropriate improvements are made. The senior teacher has a clear view of the curriculum and high expectations but subject leadership, although improved since the last inspection, is not yet strong enough to ensure that the necessary gains are made in teaching and learning. The school bursar provides very good management support. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is capacity for further improvement. Governors are becoming increasingly effective in monitoring the work of the school and bring a great deal of personal and professional expertise to the role.

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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	2	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	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	3	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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The Pupils

Castle Carrock School

Castle Carrock

Brampton

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15 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed my visit. Your school is a very friendly place. I particularly liked the 'mix up' afternoon that the younger children have; I could see that they learn a lot as well as having lots of fun. Children in Key Stage 2 have lots of opportunities to go out on visits and to work with children in other schools and I thought that was a good thing. Your attendance is very good and I could see how happily you come to school each morning. Your parents feel that you are very well cared for and I agree with them.

You achieve very good results in maths, science and reading but you do need to improve the results you gain in writing. You are very good at explaining your thoughts and ideas, your work is interesting, and you use good, descriptive language. However, some of you could improve your handwriting, presentation and punctuation, and at the top of Key Stage 2 you do not always organise different types of writing correctly. Remember that even the most interesting stories in the world have to be written so that people can understand them. Also, good and accurate writing is a skill you will need all your lives; not everyone will grow up to be an author or a scientist, but you all need to learn how to write clear reports and letters, and you have to learn how to make notes as you grow older in school.

I have asked Mr Marsh to make sure that your teachers help you to put these things right and also to explain to you what you need to do in your other subjects as well so that you can do even better work.

Once again, thank you for your help during the inspection and good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C E Graham

Her Majesty's Inspector