



# Hensingham Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 133726  
**LEA** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 282348  
**Inspection dates** 6 June 2006 to 7 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Christine Graham HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Main Street
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		Whitehaven
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Cumbria, CA28 8QZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 852672
<b>Number on roll</b>	231	<b>Fax number</b>	01946 852672
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr J Sharpe
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Lacey

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 6 June 2006 - 7 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282348
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## **Introduction**

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

## **Description of the school**

The school opened in 2002. The separate infant and junior schools were amalgamated on the site of the junior school. The school is of average size. It serves a mixed area with some families being very disadvantaged. Children start Nursery soon after their third birthday and most now remain in the school until the age of eleven. A small proportion of pupils speak English as their second language but only one is at an early stage of learning English. Although the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about the same as that found in most schools, a small number of pupils have very significant difficulties. The school works in partnership with a nearby special school.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Hensingham Community Primary School gives pupils a satisfactory education. The months following the amalgamation were productive for the school. Some new staff were appointed and improvements were made to teaching and learning. This resulted in improved pupil progress. By the end of the first year the school had successfully tackled behaviour problems and created a culture in which the differences between pupils were valued. Good relationships were established with parents and pupil numbers began to rise. The school continued to make progress during the following year.

However, the school was then placed under unexpected and extreme pressure including many staff absences and the promotion of key members of staff including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. During this turbulent period the gains made in earlier years have been sustained, through the hard work of the remaining staff, but they have not been improved upon. For this reason while most aspects of the schools work are satisfactory, very little is better than this. This matches the view of both the school and the local authority (LA)

Teaching is broadly satisfactory although there is some teaching which is better than this and all teaching had some strengths. Teaching assistants are very effective. They provide very good support for pupils of all ability levels but especially those with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. When children start Nursery some can do much less than children in other schools. They make good progress in the 'Early Years Unit' because of the good teaching and support they receive and by the end of the Reception Year most are reaching the level expected for their age. However, this good progress is not maintained throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. All pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school but this progress is uneven; much better progress is made by pupils in the classes where teaching is good. Information about the achievements of individual pupils is not used effectively to set challenging targets. Attendance is low. The new headteacher is already taking steps to correct this.

Staff look after pupils very well and value the qualities that each child brings to the school. Parents are very appreciative of school staff and already have confidence in the new headteacher. Many commented about the very good support their children had received. Pupils have many opportunities to make decisions; they feel that they are consulted and that their views are listened to. The school council was involved in the appointment of the new headteacher and believes that it made the right decision.

In April the school welcomed its third headteacher of the current year. He has a clear view of the strengths of the school but is also realistic about the things which need to be improved. The school has a deficit budget but is receiving support from the LA to manage this so that improvements can be made. The assistant headteacher provides much needed continuity and effective leadership and teaching skills. The headteacher and senior leadership team have the skills needed to bring about further improvements to teaching and learning. The LA is giving effective support to the leadership team and this and government initiatives aimed at raising standards have helped the school sustain the improvements made to teaching and learning. Governors are now much

more active in monitoring the work of the school. With the return of key members of staff and the appointment of a new headteacher the school is moving forward. It now has a more secure base from which to bring about further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that all teaching is as good as the best.
- Use the information collected about pupil achievement more effectively to set challenging targets.
- Keep attendance under careful review to ensure pupils get maximum benefit from their time in school.
- Eliminate the budget deficit.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to Nursery is below average. The abilities of some boys are particularly low in speaking and listening and in personal and social skills. Because of good provision children make good progress in the Early Years Unit and by the time they leave Reception they reach levels close to those expected for their age. For the last three years standards have been below average by the end of Key Stage 1. However, evidence from recent assessments show that the numbers of pupils reaching the expected levels is now in line with the national expectations. This represents satisfactory progress although few pupils reach higher than expected levels. Results of national tests in English at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved in the last three years, partly as the result of LA support. However, results in science have declined because the school has not adapted teaching to match the changes in national tests. All pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2, but this progress is uneven across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and in some cases better than this.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

The personal development and well-being of pupils is satisfactory, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they enjoy school but attendance is low, some of this is caused by holidays in term time and some pupils have a whole day off for medical appointments. The presence of pupils with learning disabilities has taught pupils to be sensitive and accepting of the needs of others. Many parents commented on the very positive way their children had developed during their time at the school. When things go wrong pupils are asked to decide what to do next and how to put things right. Because of this they retain their dignity and can move on quickly from the incident. There is a happy atmosphere in school, all pupils get on well together. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds provide very real links with other countries. This was demonstrated by the addition of home language books on World

Book Day and their exchange of books with a school in Spain. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe. The field, which includes a public right of way, is 'swept' every morning to remove potentially dangerous items and pupils understand why this needs to be done.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is broadly satisfactory but in some lessons it is better than this. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan lessons carefully and explanations are clear. In the lessons where teaching is good work is accurately matched to the needs of all pupils and expectations for pupil progress are high. Marking in all classes tells pupils what they have achieved but the best marking also tells them how to improve. Pupils make careless mistakes and handwriting and presentation are sometimes very untidy. Not enough attention is given to correcting this. When teaching is good pupils are actively involved in learning. They share ideas with partners, have opportunities to solve problems, can plan their own learning, assess how much they have learned and how much more support they need. In these lessons pupils are enthusiastic and eager to answer questions and as a result they make good progress

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is balanced and meets statutory requirements. Information and communication technology is used effectively to make teaching more interesting and to give pupils the skills they will need for their future lives. Some staff make the curriculum more meaningful for pupils by illustrating it with examples from the local area. Pupils can then relate topics to their own experience and realise, for instance, that geographical features have a very real impact on their lives. Efforts are made to overcome geographical isolation through a range of trips and visits, including a visit to France. In preparation for this some pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French. As a result pupils gain a wider perspective of the world while appreciating the area in which they live. Not enough time is spent on practical work and problem solving and there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently or in small groups. There are a good range of sporting activities and the school successfully promotes healthy living and keeping safe within all subjects.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Relationships in the school are good. Pupils feel well cared for and this gives them a feeling of self worth, however, some pupils, especially boys, are reluctant to answer questions or express their opinions even when they know the answers. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. A very small number of pupils have difficulties

managing their behaviour. Staff deal with them sensitively without disrupting the learning of others in the class. As a result most remain in the classroom and continue with their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support, especially from the very conscientious support staff. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and are well supported by staff. Parents comment very favourably on the support their children have been given and the difference this has made to them. Parents are encouraged to bring their children into school in the mornings and they stay in the classroom for the first minutes of the morning session. This provides a very pleasant start to the day and does much to sustain the partnership between home and school. Inconsistencies in marking and the use of information about the learning of individual pupils mean that the guidance given to pupils is only satisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses within the school and has already made convincing plans to bring about improvement. The assistant headteacher provides much needed continuity and effective teaching and leadership skills. The senior leadership team have the skills to bring about further improvement. Staffing is increasingly stable and this is improving both the quality of teaching and the leadership of the school. There are good indicators that the school is beginning to move forward but this is at an early stage. The school is currently running a deficit budget, although, they are receiving effective support from the LA to manage this. However, the legacy of the school's recent turbulent past is not yet resolved and this is placing additional pressures on the leadership team. Governors are now much more involved in monitoring the work of the school and are kept fully informed by the headteacher.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	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	NA	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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  
Hensingham Community Primary School  
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Whitehaven  
Cumbria  
CA28 8QZ  
8 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our visit. Your school is a very happy place. You are very thoughtful towards each other and you understand the differences between people. Your parents think the school looks after you very well and they are right.

The school is now becoming more settled. You have a new headteacher. We think the school council did a good job when they helped appoint him. Mr. Lacey already has many plans to make the school better. We have asked him to make sure you get lots of opportunities to solve problems and be really involved in your learning. We noticed that many of you do not like to answer questions or share your ideas. We want your teachers to think of ways to help you to become more confident. We also want you to work even harder so that you all achieve as much as you possibly can. In some classes pupils really enjoyed their work, even when it was hard, because they could see they were making progress. We have asked Mr. Lacey to make sure all lessons are like that.

The staff will do a lot to make the school better but you also have a part to play. Some of you are careless, you make silly mistakes in your work and you do not correct them. You must try to make every piece of work the best it can possibly be. Some of you are absent from school too often. Even if lessons are interesting and exciting you will not learn unless you are actually in school. Please try to attend unless you are really ill.

There are many good things about your school and we think it will become even better. We wish you well for the future.

Best wishes

Mrs Graham and Mr Jackson