

# Holme St Cuthbert School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112112
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	289176
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Earley

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	47
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Shelagh Daniel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Mawbray Maryport Cumbria CA15 6QZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 881242
<b>Fax number</b>	01900 881242

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small primary school is situated in an isolated rural location. Most pupils are brought to the school by car. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language and all are from White British backgrounds. Eligibility for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes and year groups are very small. Although standards fluctuate year on year when children join the Foundation Stage (Reception) standards are generally below expectations for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. Parents think very highly of the school. One parent expressed great pride in their child attending such a wonderful school, which was described as being like one big happy family. This family ethos ensures that all are extremely well cared for within a safe and secure environment.

Pupils achieve well. From starting points which are generally below expectations, children make good progress in Reception and by the end of it reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. Assessments in 2006 showed that standards in Year 2 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, results in the 2006 national tests were broadly average in English and mathematics, but significantly above average in science. These results were not as good as in the previous year because there was a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, pupils achieved well, especially in science. Progress for most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good and improving because teaching is good and the curriculum is stimulating.

Pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Consequently, their behaviour is excellent and their good attendance reflects the great pleasure that pupils gain from their education. Relationships are excellent and pupils are very confident and secure. Pupils have an extremely good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and of how to care for the environment. They have a very strong sense of responsibility for helping each other and for contributing to the community. Given their good achievement, excellent attitudes and social skills, pupils are very well prepared for their future life.

Teaching is good. Lessons are usually lively and interesting and teachers use assessment well so that work set is appropriately challenging for pupils of different ages and abilities. The good curriculum inspires pupils' learning and is planned well to exploit pupils' interests and effectively meet their differing needs. There are however, insufficient opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy skills by using them in other subjects. Systems for ensuring health and safety and safeguarding pupils are very good.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff form a highly committed team, sharing a very clear vision for raising standards and improving provision. This is enhanced by the school's accurate self-evaluation of its effectiveness, although subject coordinators have insufficient opportunities to check teaching and learning in order to make improvements. Governance is good and the governors' good knowledge of the school enables them to help shape its direction.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in literacy and numeracy by using them in other subjects.
- Increase the opportunities for subject coordinators to check teaching and learning in order to make improvements.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress because of good teaching and a stimulating curriculum. All statistical data

needs treating with caution because of the small numbers in each year group. Trends over time however, show that standards are improving.

After starting school in the Foundation Stage with standards that are below expectations for their age, children make good progress and by the end of Reception, reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. At the end of Year 2, the results of the 2006 assessments were broadly average in mathematics and writing and slightly below average in reading. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that in the current Year 2 pupils are achieving well and are on line to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

In 2006, standards in Year 6 dipped in English and mathematics in comparison to the previous year. They were broadly average in English and mathematics but significantly above in science. The dip in standards was caused by a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Given the nature of the group, their results represented good achievement. Better use is being made of teaching strengths in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are currently achieving well and their performance in English and mathematics in Year 6 is now matching science.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is good and pupils really enjoy school because work is very interesting and relationships are excellent. As they move through the school, pupils develop confidence and high self-esteem so that they approach learning confidently and accept responsibility willingly. Older pupils organise 'positive playtimes' and the school council promotes and organises fundraising events for charity. They have a particularly good understanding of how to sustain the local environment as Solway Rangers. Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of an appropriate diet and exercise in leading a healthy lifestyle, reflected in the achievement of the Active Mark Award. Preparation for future economic well-being and the next stage in education is excellent. This is because there is a close focus on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), collaborative skills are very good and pupils learn about a wide range of occupations. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and appreciate the real family community where each pupil is well known and valued. The school is a focal point for the local community. Pupils take part in community celebrations, contribute to the local newspaper and parish magazine and work alongside the local history society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. A major strength in teaching is the use of assessment to provide pupils of different ages and abilities in each of the two mixed age classes with appropriately challenging work so that they make good progress. Pupils want to learn because typically lessons are lively and interesting. For example, older pupils worked with a writer in residence to deepen their understanding of local involvement in the past slave trade and to extend their literacy, music, history and drama skills. Teachers and support staff work very closely together. This is particularly effective in the Foundation Stage, ensuring that children in Reception develop their learning well in all the areas of learning. Teachers manage pupils well; resulting

in excellent behaviour, whilst encouraging pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Relationships are excellent so that pupils willingly approach teachers if they have a problem and are confident to learn from their mistakes.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and is enhanced by many practical and stimulating activities to enrich and extend learning. This is significant in the good and improving progress made by most pupils and in their understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. It is well planned to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities and from different age groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school makes good use of pupils' interests such as gardening and care for the environment to extend their learning. However, the school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in literacy and numeracy by using them in other subjects. There are good links with outside agencies, particularly in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum is further enriched by many visits and visitors and by the wide range of after-school clubs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good and enhance achievement and personal development. Pastoral care, guidance and support are outstanding. There are very thorough procedures in place for child protection, health and safety and for safeguarding children. This is a very caring school with a very real family atmosphere. All feel highly valued and important and pupils are concerned enough to care for each other. Adults provide very good role models and pupils are confident to approach them should they have a problem. Most parents are very positive about the care shown to their children and the many opportunities provided for them to be involved in their children's learning; for example, through the family literacy scheme. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good so that they make good progress. Academic support and guidance are good. The school uses its assessment and tracking systems effectively to identify areas for improvement for groups and individuals and this helps to quicken progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. In a short time, the headteacher has gained the confidence of the school community and provides a good role model through her own good teaching and the promotion of the school's family ethos. She provides a very clear vision for the school's development, which is shared by staff and governors. Everyone is committed to raising standards further in terms of pupils' personal and academic development. The school's performance is carefully evaluated in order to make improvements and is closely linked to the well prioritised school improvement plan. Governance is good. Governors participate effectively in shaping the school's direction and holding it to account. The budget is astutely managed to support learning and raise standards.

The school has improved since the last inspection; although, the school is aware of the need to extend subject coordinators' roles in monitoring teaching and learning in order to make

improvements. Strong purposeful leadership, a shared commitment to raise standards and accurate self-evaluation give the school good capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holme St Cuthbert School, Cumbria, CA15 6QZ

I really enjoyed my visit to your school because you all made me really welcome. I was very impressed to see how well you all understand about the importance of eating properly and getting plenty of exercise in order to keep fit. I was pleased to hear that you feel safe and enjoy coming to school because everyone is very caring and kind. I think that the way you help to look after the environment is brilliant and that the 'Solway Rangers' do a great job. You also are very good at helping each other and ensuring that every one has lots to do at playtime.

These are some of the things your school does well.

- The teachers make sure that lessons are enjoyable and interesting so that you want to learn.
- Your attendance is good and the skills you learn will help you when you become adults.
- There are lots of visits, visitors and after school clubs and this helps you to learn more.
- The care shown to everyone is super and you are really well looked after.
- Your teachers make a great team and they all want you to do as well as you can.

These are some of the things where your school could do better.

- Give teachers more opportunities to check how well you learn in all the different subjects so that they can make improvements.
- I would like you to try and make more use of your English and mathematics skills in the other subjects to help you to improve.

Thank you once again for your kind and courteous welcome and I hope you have a good crop of potatoes again this year.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead Inspector