

# Plumpton School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112120
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	289180
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Oglesby

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	83
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Derek Graham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Plumpton Penrith Cumbria CA11 9PA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01768 894247
<b>Fax number</b>	01768 894247

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Plumpton Primary is a smaller than average school which serves a village community close to Penrith. Pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances. More than half of them travel from other areas. All pupils come from a White British background. The proportion identified with learning needs or disabilities is much lower than most schools, as is the proportion known to be entitled to free school meals. Children's attainment when they start school varies from year to year, but recent cohorts are above that typical for their age. The school holds the Activemark and Healthy School awards. It earned an Achievement award in 2003 and was included in the Chief Inspector of Schools' 'Particularly Successful Schools' list for that year.

## 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 school with some outstanding features. These include excellent leadership and management, consistently high standards for many years, pupils' outstanding personal development and rich curriculum. Pupils are proud to belong and parents are very happy with all that the school offers.

The headteacher has led the school for many years with a determination to provide the best possible education for every pupil. He is highly respected by pupils, staff, governors and parents. One parent described him as 'a one-off who sees good in everyone'. He leads by example in his teaching. Despite his considerable class teaching responsibilities, he finds time to inspire the whole team to work together to achieve high academic standards and promote pupils' personal development and well-being. He is very well supported by effective and involved governors, the school administrator and the whole teaching team.

Pupils are achieving well. Progress is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. These pupils reach above average standards. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make particularly good progress because they are keen to learn and receive outstanding teaching. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average. Test results for previous years show that standards have stayed above, or well above the national average every year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities prosper and make good progress because the school works hard to meet their needs. They also benefit from what one boy correctly called, 'a good learning atmosphere, there's always help if you get stuck'.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. This, together with the school's determination to make everyone succeed, is the main reason for good achievement and excellent attitudes. Parents agree; one described the teachers as 'just amazing'. Pupils think the lessons are interesting and stretch them. Some older pupils are proud of the responsibility they are given, for example, in devising their own experiments in science. Consequently they get involved, listen well, work hard and behaviour is excellent. Personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils form excellent relationships with each other, adults and visitors. They learn how to deal sensitively with others and have a mature grasp of their rights and responsibilities. They understand how to achieve good health and stay safe. Pupils leave this school as secure, self-assured individuals who enjoy learning and are used to working with others. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The curriculum is excellent, with an outstanding range of extra activities and events. Many of these come from valuable links with other organisations and local experts. This is an outward looking school which has become a hub of activity in the community. These links provide opportunities for pupils to extend their experience and skills, for example, in sport, art, music and drama.

The school cares for all its pupils very well. Pupils know they are valued and that their achievements and needs are recognised. The current issue of providing security locks for external doors has divided parental opinion, but governors are taking expert advice and are keen to resolve this.

The school looks critically at everything it does and is constantly seeking ways to do better. Self-evaluation is accurate, though sometimes modest in some aspects. The school keeps a close eye on standards and has accurate records. However, this data is not used well enough to analyse each pupils' rate of progress at each stage. The school has maintained and improved

the strengths seen at the last inspection. It has an excellent capacity to improve. Finance is well managed and the school provides good value for money.

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

- Make more effective use of the existing information on standards and pupils' achievements, in order to give teachers a clearer picture of progress in all parts of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are achieving well. National test results for the last five years show that pupils have consistently reached standards above, and sometimes well above, the national average. A relative weakness in writing last year has been dealt with very well. Current standards are above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6.

Children make a good start in the Reception class where the provision is good. They settle in quickly and make good progress. Almost all reach the national level expected and some go beyond this. Pupils continue to achieve well in the rest of the school. The rate of progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching is sometimes inspiring and pupils show a mature desire to succeed.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. This is because of the good support they receive from both adults and classmates. The more able pupils prosper because they respond to teachers' high expectations. 'We love a challenge', one said. In the most recent tests, more than half of the class reached levels higher than those expected for their age. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful, responsible young people who are a pleasure to spend time with. They love coming to school, enjoy learning and their behaviour is excellent. They work extremely well in teams or pairs and this helps their learning. Attendance is good. The wide range of experiences they enjoy, together with a strong programme for personal and social education, helps them to deal sensitively with others and understand different points of view or backgrounds. A parent wrote, 'In this school every child is respected and so learns to respect others.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.

Pupils know what is needed to stay healthy and safe. They make the most of all the opportunities for sport and exercise and enjoy the pleasant experience of 'family service' healthy lunches. Pupils feel that their views matter and can give their opinions politely but confidently. They cope well with responsibility, for example, in organising fund raising or in community projects.

Pupils leave this school with high standards in the basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT), excellent social skills and positive attitudes to learning. They are well equipped for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good throughout the school and outstanding in Years 5 and 6. This, together with the pupils' positive attitudes and desire to learn, is why achievement is good. Good relationships and mutual respect are strengths in every class. As some older pupils put it, 'the teachers listen to us and we feel trusted.' Teachers work hard to tailor work to the needs of individuals and groups, so tasks are usually challenging but within reach. 'They push you to the limits of your ability', said one boy. Lessons are well planned, purposeful and stimulating. Consequently, no time is wasted and pupils concentrate, get involved and work hard.

Pupils are proud of their best work. Much of this is done with great care, whether handwritten or using ICT. Occasionally teachers accept untidy handwriting or presentation. This does not encourage pupils to go the extra mile and so make even better progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It is well matched to all the pupils' different learning needs and interests. There is a good emphasis on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. These are used and practiced in all subjects and activities. The range of opportunities to extend pupils' experiences, enrich their lives and give them chances to succeed, are exceptional. Parents and pupils appreciate this. 'A remarkable range of activities for such a small school', wrote one parent. This is evident from the many displays and photographs of exciting events and lessons. The school makes very good use of parents, visitors and experts, for example to enrich provision in the arts, sport or health education. Well-chosen visits, including a residential stay, help to increase pupils' knowledge, confidence and social skills. They are regular and welcome visitors to other schools, museums and local places of interest. They enjoy many opportunities to take responsibility, both in the school and the wider community. Recent examples include work with the Young Enterprise programme and the successful garden centre started by pupils in Years 3 and 4.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet government guidelines. Excellent relationships and the school's attention to detail help pupils to feel safe, valued and well cared for. The great majority of parents support this view, for example one family wrote, 'We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have such a wonderfully caring environment for our children to be educated.' A small number of parents, whilst agreeing with this, have been concerned for some time about the lack of daytime security locks. Governors have responded by taking advice from the local authority and are committed to finding a prompt solution.

The school keeps useful data on pupils' achievement. However, this data is not always used regularly to keep an eye on progress and help teachers to plan challenging targets. Pupils say they value the advice they receive and know what to do to improve. There is some high quality marking which supports this however, this is inconsistent and marking does not always make clear what is good or what the pupil should do to improve a piece of work.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and education plans contain targets which are appropriate and achievable. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are also supported well. The school works hard to provide opportunities for these to develop their skills.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's consistently high standards and good achievement, together with the pupils' outstanding personal development, come from excellent leadership and management. The headteacher has been in post for many years and has won a deserved reputation for sustained success. He has built an effective team who work together well to drive improvements. The school receives exemplary support from governors, who challenge the school and have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members provide a good range of expertise and are involved in improving all aspects of the school's life.

Self-evaluation is accurate, though sometimes modest. The school is quick to act when standards fall slightly, for example, in the recent effective strategies to improve science and writing. Leaders keep good assessment information on each pupil's standards. However, the school is aware that they make insufficient use of this to check that all pupils are making as much progress as they can.

The school consults parents and pupils about its work. The great majority of parents appreciate this and are strongly supportive. 'A very well run school that is a credit to its community, excellent', was a typical comment. The school has earned a high local reputation, reflected in the number of families who travel from other areas





## 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?	1
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	1
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	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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>	1
<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Plumpton School, Cumbria, CA11 9PA

As you know, I visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to thank you for being so helpful, welcoming and polite. I enjoyed my visit, especially watching you and your teachers in action. Many of you told me you were proud of your school and pleased about how well you are doing. I think you should be. You attend a good school; have good teachers, interesting lessons and a terrific range of extra things, for example, the visits, visitors and events. Best of all perhaps is the way Plumpton produces such thoughtful, confident and happy pupils. I hope you all stay that way.

I admired lots of things; they won't all fit into this short letter. I especially liked:

- the way everyone seems to pull together at Plumpton, including all the adults and all of you. Sometimes it felt like one big family
- the way you enjoy lessons and get involved. You work hard and are determined to improve. No wonder you are learning well
- the way everyone matters. One of Year 6 said, 'We all have success here.' I think he was right.

We usually leave some suggestions for things that could be even better. In your case there is only one.

- Mr Davis and your teachers know you very well indeed. As you know they keep careful records of how well you are learning. I have suggested that they make this information even more useful by using it to measure your progress right from the reception class. In this way they can see the 'big picture' of progress in each year for mathematics, English and science and work out where it could be better.

Best wishes

Keith Oglesby

Lead inspector