

St Bees Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112164
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289187
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Donaldson
Headteacher	Mr John Wood
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001
School address	Main Street St Bees Cumbria CA27 0AA
Telephone number	01946 822392
Fax number	01946 823832

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small, rural school situated in a small coastal village. The area from which pupils attend the school is socially and economically advantaged and their attainment on entry to school is typical for children of their age. The numbers on roll are increasing year on year. A very small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including four with a statement of special educational need. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A daily breakfast and after school club provide before and after school care for pupils. The new headteacher has been in post for two terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching helps to maintain the above average standards of pupils as they go through school. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. In English they are very high and in mathematics they are significantly above average. Standards in 2006 fell slightly in science because a small number of pupils did not achieve expected levels. By the end of Year 2, standards are very high in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour and the ethos this creates throughout school contribute considerably to the good progress they make. Good provision in the Foundation Stage results in children making good progress. By the end of Reception, standards are above the national expectations for their age. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties make excellent progress. This is due to the impact of the exceptionally well targeted support by skilled teaching assistants. Boys and girls achieve equally well and the achievement of the more able pupils is consistently good.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are very confident, caring and well-mannered. A good curriculum, with a wide range of out of school clubs, contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Recent improvements to resources for information and communications technology (ICT), along with the priority given to teaching basic skills, prepare pupils extremely well for their future education. All matters of health and safety are diligently dealt with so pupils feel safe and secure at all times. A robust and useful electronic system to check the pupils' academic progress throughout school has been implemented by the headteacher, although not all staff are familiar with this. The limitations posed by the building are effectively managed apart from suitable provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

St Bees Village primary school is a good school with outstanding levels of personal development amongst pupils. They achieve well and reach above average standards. Leadership and management are good. The impact of actions by the recently appointed headteacher is already improving the learning environment and enriching the curriculum even further. Teamwork and good relationships are key features of the headteacher's approach to school management. Recent improvements in the school show that it has a good capacity for further improvement. Resources are used well and the school gives good value for money.

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Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils develop excellent attitudes, behave extremely well and demonstrate good levels of independence. They appreciate the improvements to their diet since the introduction of several initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle. As they said, 'The food is to die for'. Sport is popular with pupils who understand the importance of taking regular exercise. Pupils say they feel safe in school and even when a small number of pupils misbehave they understand this may be because they are new to school and have not yet learnt the rules. Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their above average attendance and their great enthusiasm for participating in after-school clubs, using the improved provision for ICT and enjoying the refurbishments within school. Pupils are very confident, take responsibility for younger pupils and raise money for several charities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Given the good achievement of pupils and excellent levels of personal development, they are very well prepared for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are outstanding features in the way teachers consistently share with pupils what they are expected to learn in each lesson. There is always an effective review of what pupils already know at the start of lessons so that new learning builds on what is already known. Expectations in lessons are high and the pace of learning is usually brisk, which results in good progress. Occasionally, however, there is too much sitting and listening with insufficient involvement of pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and achieves a good balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for children to follow their own interests. The outdoor environment is limited because of the distance from the classroom. This stops children having regular access to outdoor learning and reduces the progress of some aspects of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, lessons are well planned to meet the needs of the range of abilities in each class. Teaching assistants are indispensable because of the skilled support and encouragement that they provide to pupils with learning difficulties. Assessment arrangements are exemplary. Pupils' work is carefully marked so that pupils know

how to improve. In some classes, in particular Years 1 and 2, pupils are made aware of what they need to do to reach the next level. This motivates pupils to try harder in order to reach their target.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a good curriculum, which is planned to follow the national literacy and numeracy strategies with non-core subjects taught following the recommendations of non-statutory national guidance. Increasingly, teachers are exploiting links between subjects. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils carried out research using ICT in order to recall historical understanding about the sinking of the 'Titanic'. Excellent provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the needs of the more able are effectively planned for. The standard curriculum is effectively enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Clubs introduced after school, such as art and drama, are very popular with pupils. The creative and professional skills of parents are very well used to provide enrichment and support for Year 6 pupils in their 'booster' groups. A palpable enjoyment was very evident in the pupils' excitement and enthusiasm at the prospect of their residential trip to York.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of the pupils are good. The quality of personal support is good. Teaching and support staff provide a friendly ear if pupils are upset or concerned about anything. Good procedures for helping the high number of pupils joining the school at times other than the usual admission points successfully help them to settle quickly into the school's routines and expectations. They very quickly absorb the 'buzz' of the work ethic that permeates school. The headteacher has acted promptly to ensure that all aspects of health and safety are secure, including procedures for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils. Good attention to health and safety effectively helps to maintain pupils' safety when in school and on school trips. Pupils and staff alike are trained in first-aid. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exemplary. Excellent assessment systems, recently introduced, provide very useful information about the progress pupils make term by term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has taken decisive action to refurbish classrooms, improve resources for ICT and has begun a feasibility study on merging the pre-school with the Reception class. In addition, he has taken on the role of science leader and has taken action to rectify the fall in results in science in 2006. His encouragement to staff and his openness about future developments are much appreciated and engender a strong sense of teamwork. The staff team effectively manage all aspects of the school's provision and ensure that good attention is given to developing the academic and personal growth of pupils. The school self-evaluation includes the views of parents and staff and accurately identifies the areas for development. Already several actions are having a beneficial impact on standards and on pupils' enjoyment. Provision for ICT, for example, has recently improved considerably with the purchase of whiteboard technology and laptop computers. Governors are very astute and use their professional expertise to good effect to support the school in ensuring that pupils

receive an effective education. They have made sure that there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

St Bees Village Primary School

Main Street

St Bees

Cumbria

CA27 0AA

13 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I am writing to let you know what I liked about your school and what could be improved.

What was good about your school.

- You all work very hard and achieve well in the tests you take.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent and a credit to your school and to your parents.
- You are well cared for and enjoy all the interesting activities that take place in your school.
- You have so many helpers, including some of your talented parents to help in school.
- You really like all the improvements made to your school in the past two terms.

What could be better.

- It would be really good if the youngest children in school could learn outside as well as indoors.

Thank you again for the welcome you gave me.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector