

# Chapel Street Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112192
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	289197
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Heather Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Helen Watt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Chapel Street Dalton-in-Furness Cumbria LA15 8RX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 897919
<b>Fax number</b>	01229 897919

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<b>Age group</b>	3-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; the Foundation Stage; teaching and learning; care, guidance and support; leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: lesson observations; the scrutiny of pupils' work; assessment data; the school's self-evaluation; school documents and records; conversations with pupils, staff, governors and the local authority attached adviser; and the reading of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found evidence to suggest that the school's own judgements as given in the school's self-evaluation form were occasionally modest.

## Description of the school

Chapel Street is a smaller than average infant school situated in the small town of Dalton-in-Furness. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage with only a tiny minority of children who speak English as an additional language. Despite some disadvantage in the town, the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly higher than average though the number of pupils with a statement of educational need is about one third of the average.

## 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 that offers good value for money. The outstanding personal development and curriculum that are offered to pupils have ensured distinct improvement since the last inspection. The school radiates an atmosphere of calm and happiness in which achievement, care, support and personal well-being are 'visible' in all aspects of pupils' work. Parents recognise and value these qualities. One comment sums it up: 'My daughter goes to school happy and returns home happy, full of enthusiasm about what she has done that day.'

The above average standards in the 2007 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics reflect the success of the school. Pupils achieve well and regularly exceed the challenging targets that are set for them. Children enter Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age with a small number who have exceptionally weak speaking and listening skills. Overall, they make good progress by the time they reach the end of Year 2 with significantly above average standards in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress in all subjects from their low starting points. In literacy lessons, the use of creative themes and role play stirs the imagination of pupils to write with feeling. The school is successfully improving phonics sessions so that younger children become more fluent, more quickly. Despite the shortcomings of the Victorian building, vibrant and thought-provoking displays add considerably to the rich quality of the learning environment and inspire pupils to aim high. A lively, enthusiastic and accomplished team of managers, very well supported by talented staff and governors, ensures that pupils benefit equally from the school. One parent's comment is typical of many: 'I couldn't have wished for a better start in education for my child.'

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. The school works successfully to ensure pupils gain valuable first-hand cultural experiences. This is reflected in the high quality of arts provision. Despite the isolated location, pupils are extremely well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils are considerate, kind and friendly. Their confidence stems from the respect they receive and give to others. As a result, they feel safe and secure. The safeguarding of pupils meets requirements. Pupils work hard and take great pride in all that they do. They accept responsibility willingly and are never reluctant to show initiative. They are very alert to the penalties of failing to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Even though the school is unable to provide hot meals on site, pupils appreciate the benefits of a balanced diet combined with regular exercise.

The good and sometimes outstanding teaching challenges pupils to achieve well. Lessons are carefully planned to make sure the wide range of needs is met. Activities are well timed, explanations clear and questioning penetrating. Learning is enhanced by effective use of whiteboard technology and computers. Pupils are keen to respond to the high expectations set by staff. This was well illustrated by the recent work completed in the style of Picasso. Teaching assistants and students on work experience placements make a highly effective contribution by helping pupils with learning difficulties to achieve exceptionally well, particularly in their writing. Assessment is thorough and all pupils have targets to improve their work. Good oral feedback is given to pupils as to how to improve the quality of their work, though written feedback is occasionally inconsistent in its use across subjects.

The curriculum provides exceptionally well for pupils' needs. Pupils value the excellent range of first-hand learning experiences which broaden their learning and encourage personal development really well. The careful match of experiences to individual need and talent is a real strength. This is illustrated in the high quality of pupils' work in the highly successful Arts Week. Clubs and activities are well attended. There is extremely effective provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). This promotes skills to use across the curriculum, adds to the quality of their work and prepares them really well for the transfer to junior school and in later life.

Leadership and management are especially good. This is reflected in the excellent behaviour by pupils, their above average standards, good progress and often high achievement. In the few weeks since his appointment, the headteacher has established a clear vision of exactly how the school can continue to move forward. For example, attendance has already been raised to above average levels. Staff and governors are totally committed to giving pupils the best education possible. Teachers and support staff are always approachable to discuss any issues and this is valued by parents. Governance is good because governors are close to the heart of all school activity, support its work, provide expertise and check its performance. The school's own self-evaluation correctly identifies priorities, though is at times modest when it comes to judging the quality of what it provides, for example, in personal development and curriculum. This is the consequence of not having a sharp enough spotlight on the quality of impact on pupils' achievement of the strategies and initiatives it adopts. The headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated and determined to continually move forward. This gives the school a very good capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage is good. Children benefit from a 'flying start', because staff settle them quickly in a welcoming, friendly atmosphere. Parents are encouraged to stay with their children if the children need this, or call in at other times. This all boosts the high quality of care and sense of security. Assessments are made early, individual needs identified quickly and progress checked regularly. This ensures that all children achieve well with the help of well targeted support. Good, and at times, outstanding teaching successfully uses group activities and individual choice by children of where they learn. From the start, a strong emphasis is placed on speaking and listening to make certain all are able to be fully involved in learning. Outdoor areas are used to extend learning opportunities but the basic quality of provision restricts the quality and range of learning experiences. Day-to-day management is effective. By the time they leave Reception, half the children are working at levels typical for their age. They display confidence when moving into Year 1 and settle quickly. Their good progress and developing communication skills prepare them well for the next stages of reading and writing.

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

- Make certain that the school's plans for improvement link directly to the achievement of pupils.
- Improve the quality of outdoor learning opportunities for Foundation Stage children.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Age group

3-7

Inspection date(s)

15 November 2007

Inspection number

289197

16 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Chapel Street Infant School, Cumbria, LA15 8RX

Thank you for the very warm, friendly welcome to your school and for being so helpful when I met with you. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your headteacher, staff, governors and parents and joining you in your lessons and assembly. Your parents think that you go to a good school. I certainly agree and have no doubt their view is accurate.

When I spoke with you, you told me that you really enjoy coming to school, being with your friends and working hard. Your enthusiasm and interest in lessons and your excellent behaviour show that you enjoy school life. I was delighted to see you getting on so very well with each other and with all the adults. Your parents and carers also told me how extremely pleased they are with the way the school cares for you, helps you with your learning and makes certain any concerns or worries you have are listened to and dealt with promptly.

The recent national assessments revealed that pupils in Chapel Street Infant School continue to do really well. In particular, your standard of writing is really good including those of you who find writing a bit of a struggle. Your attendance is also much improved. All of this is good news and of course, everyone is very pleased. I have asked the school to continue to set itself high standards, challenge you in all your learning and watch your progress carefully, especially when new ways of helping you to learn are used. I have also asked the school to improve the quality of the outdoor learning activities for those of you in Nursery and Reception.

You have an important part to play in continuing to improve your school. You can help by listening carefully to all the advice of your teachers and support staff, and by trying extra hard to produce the best work that you possibly can in all lessons.

I hope you will continue to enjoy school and build on its many successes. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead Inspector