



North Walney Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112240
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289214
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Duddon Drive
School category	Community		Walney, Barrow-in-Furness
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cumbria, LA14 3TN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 471781
Number on roll (school)	137	Fax number	01229 471781
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Hazel Edmondson
		Headteacher	Mr Phillip Webster
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves a disadvantaged area where a higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. All pupils are of White British background and about a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staffing over the previous years was unsettled in Reception and Year 1, but this situation has been resolved.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school is improving rapidly under the good leadership of the headteacher. Good features are pupils' personal development and the way the school cares for all pupils. Value for money is satisfactory.

Most parents have positive views of the school. One said, 'The school has given my child a great start in life'. However, school initiatives to help parents support their child's learning at home have not been well attended. The school has a bright and welcoming ethos where every child matters. Pupils respond to this by attending regularly, behaving well and enjoying all the activities they experience. One pupil summed up their views saying, 'Our school is very good'. They feel safe, and know that if any unfriendly incidents occur, staff swiftly sort out problems and listen to their views. Pupils become responsible members of the school community and enjoy representing their classes as school councillors.

Standards are average, and achievement is satisfactory. When children enter the school, their attainment is below that typical for their age. Most significantly, their language, personal and social skills are lower. Good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes give children a good start. They progress satisfactorily, most rapidly in language and personal development but do not quite meet the expected goals for the end of Reception. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Key Stage 2 test results for the last two years showed that pupils achieved well, particularly in mathematics and science, indicating that the rate of progress is beginning to speed up. Standards in English are average, but are not as high as in the other subjects, particularly in writing, because pupils do not have a wide vocabulary.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, resulting in satisfactory progress. During the inspection much good teaching was observed. Well organised classrooms, quality resources and well planned activities ensure that pupils concentrate and try hard. Sometimes, work is not matched well to pupils' different abilities so they progress more slowly. The curriculum is satisfactory, and the school provides a good range of enrichment activities. These include French, dance, sports clubs and two popular residential visits. Pupils appreciate the range of physical activities and like the spacious playgrounds.

Whilst undertaking a heavy teaching load, the headteacher has successfully raised expectations of what pupils can achieve, seen in improved standards in Key Stage 2. Subject leadership and governance, whilst satisfactory, are at an early stage of contributing to the drive for improvement. Most issues from the previous inspection have been tackled rigorously since the headteacher took up post two years ago; writing remains an area for improvement. Progress since the headteacher's appointment, strongly supported by staff and governors shows there is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, particularly in writing.

- Develop the leadership roles of staff and governors in monitoring and evaluating standards and school performance so they contribute actively to school improvement.
- Ensure work is suitably matched to pupils' different abilities.

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Ensure work is suitably matched to pupils' different abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. In this small school, numbers in each year group can vary considerably, and results can be affected by the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or by pupils moving into or leaving the school. Good provision in the Foundation Stage classes ensures that children make rapid progress in language development and personal and social skills, and satisfactory progress in other areas of learning. Nevertheless, they do not reach the nationally expected goals for their age at the end of Reception.

By Year 2, pupils usually reach the standards expected for their age. Results dipped in 2006 because staffing was unsettled when these pupils were in the Foundation Stage. There was also a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the group. Pupils currently in Year 2 are working at the expected levels. The new headteacher's focus on raising standards has led to good achievement in mathematics and science and better Year 6 results in the 2005 and 2006 national tests. In 2006, results exceeded targets in mathematics and science. In writing, weaker skills and limited vocabulary meant that English targets were not achieved. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to meet their targets in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those cared for by the local authority are supported well. As a result, they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress from their individual starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social development is particularly strong, consequently:

- pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and as a result behaviour is good in lessons and elsewhere. Pupils do not think bullying is a problem. They say they feel safe in school, and can approach any member staff if they have a problem. They enjoy school.

- pupils show concern for others and as one pupil said, 'We make good friends here'. Furthermore, pupils with emotional issues or difficulties respond well to sensitive support from counsellors and learning mentors
- pupils care about their school grounds and the school council do not like litter!

Pupils are prepared well for life in a multi-cultural society by studying world religions, music and visits to different environments, for example London

Pupils make a good contribution to their community and beyond. They are proud to be elected as school councillors and pleased that their views are listened to. For example, they have successfully requested more play equipment and healthier menus. These initiatives add to all pupils' knowledge about how to be healthy, their appreciation of the large play areas and their enthusiastic participation in sports clubs and events. Pupils are keen to organise fund-raising for charities. These organisational skills, satisfactory academic progress and development of basic skills prepare them adequately for their future schooling and the world of work. Attendance is satisfactory. Good attendance is encouraged through the use of rewards and competitions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The headteacher has placed a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and its quality is rising throughout the school. Typical lessons are well organised and well planned. Classrooms, displays and the school environment are bright and attractive, and support learning with lots of prompts, vocabulary and spellings. 'Challenge areas' set problems for pupils to tackle and develop their reasoning skills. A proportion of good teaching was seen during the inspection, including some imaginative methods, for example tasting crisps in a mathematics lessons helped pupils make graphs showing the most popular flavours. On some occasions, time is not used well so pupils sit for too long and lose concentration, which slows their progress. Too often, the same work is set for all pupils, regardless of their ability, so some find the task too difficult and others find it too easy and progress slows. Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide skilled support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's efforts to help parents support their children's learning at home have met with limited success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are covered appropriately. In the Foundation Stage, good practical and investigational learning experiences meet the children's needs well. Good provision for pupils' personal development results in good behaviour and care for others and the environment. Pupils' learning and social skills are effectively enhanced by varied enrichment activities. The two annual residential visits are a well established and popular feature of school

life. Pupils learn French in Year 3 and the school makes good use of professional expertise, for example Year 6 pupils enjoy flamenco dancing with a specialist dance teacher. After school clubs offer several sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for child protection, health and safety, assessment of risks and the safeguarding of pupils are robust. Support staff play a strong role in caring for pupils' well-being. There are good links with outside professional pupil and family support agencies that support pupils' learning and personal development effectively. Good systems are in place for tracking and monitoring academic progress. Although relatively new, they provide valuable information about pupils' progress. Staff quickly direct additional help where it is needed to ensure that every pupil makes at least satisfactory progress. Assessment information is used to set targets for individual pupils and year groups. Consequently, pupils know what they have to do and are suitably challenged to reach or exceed their own goals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been in post for almost two years and his good leadership and clear vision for the future has united staff and governors in the drive for school improvement. When he was appointed, appropriate areas for action were swiftly identified and prompt actions implemented, including monitoring the quality of teaching. There is now an air of optimism about what can be achieved, standards have risen, staff morale is high and the school is bright, welcoming and secure. This has all been achieved whilst the headteacher undertakes a very demanding teaching load. Staff manage several subject areas satisfactorily. Their role does not yet include monitoring teaching and standards to contribute fully to school improvement planning. Governance is satisfactory. The experienced chair leads the governors well and provides good levels of challenge and support for the school. The governing body is now beginning to check the work of the school adequately. The inspection confirmed the accuracy of the school's self evaluation and good understanding of strengths and areas for development, although personal development and well-being was found to be better than the school's cautious judgement. Equal opportunities are promoted well; every pupil has the chance to take part in all activities including the residential visits. The school is well resourced and the budget managed carefully to support improvement plans and staff development.

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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?	3
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	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

North Walney Primary School

Duddon Drive

Walney

Barrow-in-Furness

Cumbria

LA14 3TN

8 December 2006

Dear Children

You may remember that I spent two days at your school this week. I enjoyed my visit very much, especially meeting you all and listening to what you told me about your school. Many children told me how much they like the space outside where you all have room to play, but the school council don't like it when children leave litter behind! It was good to see Year 6 learn to dance the flamenco.

I will tell you some of the things I found.

You enjoy coming to school and you behave well and look after each other. All the staff care for you well and make sure you are safe, happy and work hard in school. You know how to stay healthy and enjoy sports, games and clubs. You find your lessons interesting, so you work hard and are doing better in school. The school makes sure that you have lots of visits and visitors. I know Year 6 pupils are already looking forward to their visit to London next year.

You have a good headteacher who works hard with the staff and the governors to make sure that the school is bright and welcoming. I have asked the staff to help you improve your English, especially writing and to give you work that is not too hard and not too easy. They are going to make sure your school gets better and better.

You can help them by working hard and always doing your best in school.

Happy Christmas to you all.

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead Inspector