



High Hesket CofE School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112248
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289216
Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Arthur Allison

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Hesket
School category	Voluntary controlled		Carlisle, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	3–11		CA4 0HU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01697 473386
Number on roll (school)	118	Fax number	000
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Philip Sant
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving a rural area. The children are taught in five classes, three of which are mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are lower than in most schools. Almost all pupils are White British and none is in the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry to the Nursery class fluctuates from broadly typical to, occasionally, above that of children of their age. Some pupils are admitted at the beginning of Year 4 from a neighbouring village school that caters for pupils to the end of Year 3. The school is emerging from a period of staff changes, including the recent appointment of a new headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

High Hesket is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. The vast majority of parents have every confidence in the school. One wrote that the school, 'gives a good primary education' with 'lots of opportunities through inter-school competitions be it sports, chess, maths etc which encourages them to explore lots of avenues and experience many social occasions leading to confidence, but most importantly self-esteem'.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and thereafter to reach standards that are above average at the end of Year 6. This is due to determined leadership and consistently good teaching that focuses sharply on what individual pupils need to do to make good progress. The whole school community works together as a team. The good curriculum is excellently enriched and contributes enormously to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. Through its good self-evaluation, the school is aware that learning is more purposeful when subjects are linked together. Actions to make this a regular feature of lessons are having some success but are not yet fully in place. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very well to make lessons interesting and give pupils many opportunities to use computers themselves to support learning across all subjects. There is some good marking that helps pupils know what they have achieved and what to do to improve, but this is not consistent across the school. As a result, some pupils have better guidance and more opportunities to improve their work than others, especially in writing. An outstanding feature of the good level of pastoral care and support is the early identification of those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the help given that enables them to make similar progress to other pupils.

Excellent personal development and good basic skills prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils are very polite, extremely well behaved and know how to stay safe. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school because they know that all staff want to help them do their best. They have an excellent understanding of the need for a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider communities through the class and school councils and in raising money for charities. Older pupils take on and fulfil responsibilities with confidence. They are very mature for their age in their concern for their peers and those less fortunate than themselves.

Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed headteacher is very perceptive and committed to helping the school move forward. The school's self-evaluation is very clear about what it should do in the drive to raise standards further. Given the strong leadership, the improvement in standards and the sharp focus on priorities in the school's development plan, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking of work consistently helps pupils to know what they have achieved and what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. They make good progress throughout the school to reach standards that are above average at the end of Key Stage 2.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class varies from year to year. They make good progress from their different starting points in response to good provision. By the end of the Reception year, standards are usually higher than what is typical for children of their age.

In 2006 standards in the end-of-key stage assessments for Key Stage 1 were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Numbers in the year groups are usually small so overall performance fluctuates a little from year to year according to the make up of the year group. All pupils make good progress from their starting points in Year 1. Pupils' results in end-of-key stage tests taken in Year 6 in 2006 reflected good progress from their above average results when they were in Year 2. Standards were above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. This was because all pupils attained the nationally expected level in English, mathematics and science and the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 was above average. The school did well to reach its challenging targets in English and just failed to reach its target for the higher Level 5 in mathematics.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because their learning and pastoral needs are identified and supported from an early stage. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and behaviour are excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are confident that bullying is a thing of the past. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their consistently good attendance. The very high level of interest in what the school provides was very evident when a piper visited on Burns Day. Pupils are very well aware of how to stay safe. They know there is always an adult to turn to when needed. Their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is exceptional. They explain at length the need for a balanced diet and plenty of exercise. Pupils have excellent attitudes to work. Their academic and personal skills are developing very well and provide a secure basis for their future well-being. Pupils make a tremendous contribution to the school and wider communities. There are many examples of this including the playground monitor

system and performances for members of the village community. Pupils have a very mature concern for those less fortunate than themselves, and regularly raise money for charities. Pupils are proud to serve on the class and school councils and show deep concern for their peers and the wider community, notably the school in Tanzania with which the school has forged links.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. This is a critical factor in pupils' good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise; they ensure that pupils understand what they should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Information gained from careful questioning is used very effectively to check on learning and to plan challenging tasks that are usually well matched to pupils' needs and ability. Interactive whiteboards are used very well to arouse interest and extend learning. Pupils have many opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. This was well illustrated by pupils in Year 6 in a literacy lesson where pupils were writing playscripts with directions for the characters; the room was a hive of purposeful yet calm activity. Marking is satisfactory overall. The best marking makes clear to pupils what they have achieved and, particularly with older pupils, indicates what they need to do to improve. Marking of this quality is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is founded on an emphasis on personal and social education. This provides all pupils with the skills and attributes needed to become good learners. Basic skills are consolidated and used well to support learning in other subjects. The school is aware that the planned curriculum should link subjects more closely to help pupils make even better progress through purposeful activities. The curriculum is extensively enriched. The school grounds - with its mathematics, science and wildlife areas - make a very good contribution to learning. Day visits, the residential experience for older pupils and visitors are much appreciated by pupils. The range of sports, some in conjunction with secondary schools and outside experts, musical opportunities, clubs and Spanish lessons add considerably to the wealth of learning experiences. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress because of coherent planning for both indoor and outdoor provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care, guidance and support is good. Guidance and support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are outstanding. As a result of the early

identification of their needs and the support provided these pupils make similar progress to others. Pupils who are gifted or talented are identified and supported well, particularly for those with musical ability. The procedures for monitoring the progress of individual pupils are beginning to identify how pupils can be helped to make even better progress. However, this is at an early stage and pupils are not yet sufficiently involved or confident in contributing to this process. As a result, opportunities are missed for further improvement. Procedures and practices for child protection and all aspects of health and safety are robust and the school carefully follows national guidance for safeguarding children. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe and secure place. Arrangements for children starting Nursery are very good because of the links with the local playgroup and the strong links forged with parents. Also, the induction arrangements for those who join the school in Year 4 are good. As a result, children settle quickly into school routines.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very perceptive and powerful leadership. She has the full support of all staff in her drive to raise standards further, in a caring environment in which every child prospers. The school has a very good understanding of how well it is doing, resulting in action where weaknesses are identified. For example, an audit of the curriculum has led to the introduction of an excellent range of activities which add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of learning. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in pupils' achievement, personal development and in the enrichment of the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed well. Resources are used well, though the limited space in the Foundation Stage makes this a daily challenge.

The views of parents and pupils are sought and acted on appropriately, such as the pupils' suggestion for more playground equipment. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well; they are knowledgeable about the school's performance and provide a careful balance between support and challenge.

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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?	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	2

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 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	2

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.

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	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

High Hesket CE School

High Hesket

Carlisle

Cumbria

CA4 0HU

28 January 2007

Dear Pupils

What a super school you attend! I thoroughly enjoyed my visit, particularly talking to you and seeing you work so hard in class. I shall long remember your rapt attention when the piper came at lunchtime on Burns Day.

From what I saw and what you said to me, I know you are very proud of your school and really enjoy coming because:

- your behaviour is excellent and helps you to make good progress in your learning
- you work hard in lessons because the teachers give you interesting, but challenging, work to do
- you really appreciate what you learn from the interesting visitors and visits arranged by the school, such as the visit to a Buddhist temple, and the many opportunities to take part in events such as the chess competition at Plumpton
- you are very confident about taking on responsibilities, for example, as playground monitors and members of the class and school councils. Your suggestions help to make the school better
- you know how well the school cares for you all and knows what needs to be done to help you to do your best.

As a result of what I saw and what you said to me, I think that the school will help you to do better when:

- you know what you have achieved in your written work and what you need to do to improve.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison

Lead inspector