



Asby Endowed School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112267
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289228
Inspection date 28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Great Asby
School category	Voluntary controlled		Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria CA16 6EX
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01768 351154
Number on roll (school)	22	Fax number	0000
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Cath Gibbons
		Headteacher	Mr Rick Willett
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school where pupils are taught in two classes. At the time of the inspection, one class was taught by a temporary teacher and the other by the headteacher. The school is in a very sparsely populated area and pupils come from a distance to attend the school. Very few pupils take a free school meal. A similarly low number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and no pupils have English as an additional language. An average number of pupils are assessed as having learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'One big happy family,' writes one parent. This is very true in this welcoming school. It provides an acceptable quality of education with some good features. Teachers make learning fun by including a variety of activities. Praise and encouragement feature strongly and enhance confidence. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and attendance is usually above the national average. Staff know the pupils very well and parents are pleased with the good attention given to the safety and welfare of their children. Pupils say they feel safe because they know somebody is always at hand if they need help. The school has achieved Healthy School accreditation and pupils show a real understanding about how to keep themselves fit and healthy. The focus on fitness is also evident in the enrichment to the curriculum which provides a good range of sporting activities. The school is very much a community and pupils contribute to the family atmosphere in many ways. For example, older pupils socialise with younger ones and help them to read the songs in collective worship. This willingness to help others transfers to the local community and the school is very much at the heart of village life. This strength in social skills and the pupils' academic skills prepares them well for the future.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. As a result, achievement is satisfactory although more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons and could make more progress. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. From an average starting point children make satisfactory progress and by the end of Reception children reach the early learning goals expected for their age. The room is small and not clearly organised to meet the needs of this age range. Although the focus is on practical activities, it is difficult for the children to experience play and learn to be independent. The outside space is very attractive but not accessible without an adult and this restricts opportunities to learn outside. Results in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 fluctuate because of the small number of pupils in the cohorts. Taking an overview of results over the last five years progress is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with the national average. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show standards are not as high in mathematics and science as in English because few pupils reach above average standards. This weakness is also evident in the 2006 test results and has become a focus for the school. Until recently the school did not have a clear picture about progress in science and so the more able pupils have not been targeted with hard enough work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A clear strength is the leadership from the headteacher. Parents appreciate the way he has sustained the school's commitment to enjoyment in education. Management from headteacher, staff and governors is satisfactory. Not enough emphasis has been given to raising standards and to finding out what is working well and what needs attention. Consequently, standards remain similar to the time of the last inspection. Improvement since then is satisfactory and the need to be more challenging remains an area requiring attention. Capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make teaching more challenging especially for the more able pupils in science.
- Improve the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage.
- Extend self-evaluation procedures to ensure that priorities for development are linked to raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. From an average starting point when children enter the Foundation Stage they make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and reach the expected learning goals for their age.

Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. The very small numbers of pupils taking national tests each year mean that the school's results cannot be compared reliably with national data. However, taking the results over the last few years, standards are broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show English was the strongest subject in 2005 because most of the pupils reached above average standards. This reflects good progress. In mathematics and especially in science, this has not been the case because the more able have not made enough progress. 2006 results show a similar picture. Improved assessment means the school identifies more able pupils earlier, but it is too soon to see that changes are having an impact on standards.

The very small numbers make it impossible to identify any difference in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress to overcome identified concerns because they benefit from working in small groups and receive invaluable support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children arrive eagerly every day and greet their friends enthusiastically. They really enjoy school as is evident in their above average levels of attendance. Pupils are energetic and enjoy physical activity. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and are fully aware of how to keep fit. They know how to keep safe because they listen carefully to advice from staff and visitors. The new school council recognises it has an important role to carry out because last year's council was most influential in improving resources. All pupils make a good contribution to the community by helping others and in practical ways like recycling. A review of books shows Year 6 pupils complete a lot of homework showing a mature approach to working independently. This, plus high self-esteem and academic skills, prepares them well for the future.

Social and moral development is good. Pupils understand their actions affect others. Consequently, behaviour and relationships are good. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils appreciate the beauty of nature in the surrounding hills. The act

of worship does not develop a spiritual element by including reflection or music as pupils arrive. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of other faiths but are not fully aware of how other beliefs affect the way people live.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Teachers enhance pupils' self-esteem through praise and encouragement so pupils feel confident to share their ideas. Teachers include a variety of activities that sustain pupils' interest. Interactive white boards are used well to teach specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills as well as adding that extra element to sustain learning. In Key Stage 1, this approach most effectively helped pupils with their counting skills. In the Foundation Stage, staff provide children with time to be less formal and to choose an activity but it is not always clear what they are intended to learn in these sessions. Throughout the school, the pace of learning is not always fast enough to ensure effective learning. At times activities are not sufficiently challenging or too much time is spent listening or waiting so that valuable learning time is lost. For example, in numeracy in Year 2, more able pupils finished quickly because their work was too easy and they did not have additional work to extend their learning. A review of science books shows little opportunity for pupils setting up their own investigations. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning both when they lead small groups as well as when they offer individual guidance to pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Teachers plan well to ensure pupils cover all of the areas of the National Curriculum. This includes the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. The difficulty arises in putting these plans into action. The daily routine is too formal for the needs of these children and the classroom is not organised effectively to enable children to learn through play or to work independently. The school has excellent links with other schools and parents appreciate that this overcomes possible feelings of isolation. Pupils come together for sporting activities, visits and visitors extending their opportunities to learn and improving their social skills by meeting and working with others of the same age. The curriculum effectively enhances pupils' progress in personal development because lessons allow discussion about relationships and these successfully develop pupils' interpersonal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care and support for its pupils. This is a close knit community and staff know the pupils very well. They trust adults and feel secure throughout the

day. Procedures to safeguard pupils' safety are good and include effective child protection procedures to ensure pupils stay safe. The school works well with outside agencies and parents so that pupils receive good support when needed.

Assessment procedures, whilst satisfactory in checking on standards reached at the end of each year, do not include the Foundation Stage to enable staff to gain a full picture of progress from start to leaving school. The school has a good system in place to involve pupils with their own learning. They all have individual targets marked on a picture of a rocket and they achieve stars when a target is reached so they know what they need to do next to improve. Pupils say this helps them to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The head is an effective leader and has successfully sustained a positive and caring atmosphere for the pupils. Parents are happy because they are involved in school life and are very pleased that their children enjoy school. Pupils feel valued and have equal access to the curriculum although some more able pupils could be challenged more. Management of the school from headteacher, staff and governors is satisfactory. Self-evaluation and monitoring have not been sharp enough. Consequently, the school's view of its effectiveness is too high because the attention given to pupils' social development outweighs that given to raising standards. Priorities are not always closely linked to raising standards and it is unclear how success will be measured. As a result, improvement in standards is satisfactory instead of good because the need to challenge the more able pupils remains an area to improve. The school is aware of this and the new tracking system is a step in the right direction to gain a more informed picture of pupils' progress. This has led to science becoming a priority. Suitable actions to raise standards are now in place although as yet it is too early to see any impact.

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Governance is satisfactory. Governors check that statutory requirements are met and that resources are deployed well. Governors visit school and so are well informed about what is happening in school. They review the school's development plan but as yet not all governors are fully involved in analysing results or early decision making.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2

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	2
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	2

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	3
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

Asby Endowed School

Great Asby

Appleby-in-Westmorland

Cumbria

CA16 6EX

29 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited you on Thursday. What a lovely place to go to school. I enjoyed the way you chatted to me and have used this information to help me write this report.

I agree that yours is a happy school and you are all good friends. It was good to see how the older children help the younger ones. You behave well and try hard to please your teachers. I was impressed by your energetic games in the morning and you certainly know how to keep fit and healthy. You told me you feel safe and it is very clear that your teachers know you well and have your best interests at heart.

I have asked your headteacher and the governors to look at ways to enable you to make better progress by setting you more challenging work especially in science. Children in the Reception class do not have a lot of space and teachers are going to look at how best to organise this for the children.

I am sure you will have lots of lovely memories of your time in school and I wish you well for the future.

Mrs J E Platt

(Inspector)