



Bridekirk Dovenby C of E Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112270
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289229
Inspection date 11 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	Dovenby
School category	Voluntary controlled		Cockermouth, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	4-11		CA13 0PG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01900 325935
Number on roll (school)	103	Fax number	01900 325935
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sarah Cousins
		Headteacher	Miss Helen Tinnion
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves the surrounding villages plus some children from the town of Cockermouth. All pupils travel by bus or car to the school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none has English as an additional language. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, but is broadly typical of children of their age. The vast majority of children have previously attended a playgroup or nursery. Three of the four class teachers have joined the school very recently.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bridekirk Dovenby is a good school that gives good value for money. The vast majority of parents have every confidence in the school. One wrote, 'I am very happy with the school. It is well led and is a very positive environment to learn in.'

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and enables pupils to make good progress and achieve above average standards by the time they leave. Teachers make good use of assessment when planning lessons. As a result, there is a good level of challenge for all pupils. A notable feature of teaching is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) by teachers to make lessons more interesting and to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. However, the marking of writing is inconsistent and does not always give pupils enough guidance about what they have to do to improve their current work. The good curriculum contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning and achievement. Nevertheless, the curriculum does not give enough guidance on the cultural diversity in British society. The school provides a good level of pastoral care and support for its pupils, with outstanding provision for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Children who entered the Foundation Stage (Reception) in 2006 are making good progress and are on track to attain or exceed the nationally set Early Learning Goals. Those who started school in 2005 made satisfactory progress from their different starting points and attained standards broadly typical for their age. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6. They attain standards that are above average, but are lower in writing than in other subjects.

Good personal development and good basic skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils are polite, well behaved and know how to stay safe. They enjoy coming to school because they know that all staff want to help them to do well. Pupils are well aware of the need for a balanced diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. The provision for exercise is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and its wider community, notably through the school council and in raising money for charities. Older pupils very confidently take on responsibilities as buddies, dinner servers and running clubs for younger pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The school's self-evaluation is very largely accurate and the school is very clear about where key improvements are needed in the drive to raise standards further. However, the links between the school development plan and raising standards is not made sufficiently clear. The school has made good progress in tackling the issues from the previous inspection. Given the effectiveness of the very good leadership in the school and the improvements in standards, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking of work helps pupils to know what they have to do to improve in writing.

- Strengthen the planned curriculum to ensure that pupils have a better understanding of our culturally diverse society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children made satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage in 2005. Most achieved the standards expected for their age by the time they entered Year 1 and some children exceeded them. Children who started Reception in 2006 settled into school well. They are making good progress and are on track to attain or exceed the nationally identified Early Learning Goals. The results of national tests fluctuate in Key Stage 1 between average and above average, but pupils make good progress from their different starting points.

Pupils attain above average standards by the time they leave Year 6 and their achievement is good. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good overall progress from their different starting points. This means that the school usually attains or exceeds its challenging targets. The Key Stage 2 results in 2005 were above average overall, reflecting good progress. Results in 2006 were better because science improved well and mathematics results were a little better. English results were slightly lower because fewer pupils attained the above average Level 5, mainly due to writing skills being not as high as reading skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social development is particularly strong. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils are adamant that bullying is rare. They enjoy school and this is reflected in consistently good attendance. Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe and know there is always an adult they can turn to. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and are successfully encouraged to keep fit and eat healthy foods. Pupils develop good attitudes and basic skills necessary for their future economic well-being. Cultural development is satisfactory because pupils have a good understanding of local traditions, but their awareness of other cultures and the culturally diverse society in which we live are no more than satisfactory. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities. For example, older pupils act as buddies to Reception children, some older pupils commendably run a dance club for younger pupils at break-times and pupils raise money for charities such as Oxfam. The school council members are very proud of their responsibilities. They speak confidently about their role and eagerly describe how their suggestion for an area of tarmac has made the playground a safer place in which to play.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and this is the main reason why standards have risen. Teachers have high expectations and motivate pupils to learn. Through their effective explanations and questioning, teachers ensure that pupils know what it is they are required to learn and how the skills and knowledge gained will be built upon in future lessons. The pace is brisk and careful questioning enables teachers to check on pupils' learning and plan subsequent work that challenges all groups of children; this contributes well to their progress. A notable feature of teaching is the use of interactive whiteboards to capture pupils' interest and extend their learning. Marking usually shows pupils clearly how well they have achieved. Despite some good practice in the Year 5/6 class, marking is less effective in helping pupils to understand how to improve their work, particularly in writing. Teachers deploy their teaching assistants well to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the teamwork in the Reception/Year 1 class is a strong factor in the good progress of children in the Foundation Stage.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good because the school has improved the outdoor provision, resources and planning to help meet the needs of all children. From the day children start school in Reception, personal and social education provides children with the foundations for the skills and attributes to become good learners. Basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT are consolidated and used well to support learning in other subjects. Provision for science and ICT are now strengths of the school. Pupils benefit considerably from the good links with external providers, such as:

- a wide range of activities, notably the provision of residential education visits;
- the provision for sport through links with a local Sports Partnership, so offering a wider a range of sports than would be usually possible in a small school.

The curriculum is enhanced by all pupils in Key Stage 2 having weekly French lessons. The school is aware that it could do more to promote pupils understanding of the culturally diverse society in which we live.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Guidance and support for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are excellent and they make good, and sometimes better, progress. The monitoring of pupils' progress is very effective and subsequent action leads to pupils reaching or exceeding their challenging individual targets. As soon as a need for support is

identified, action is taken whether for an individual or a group. For example, pupils in Year 1 made satisfactory, not good, progress when in Reception so additional effective help was provided early in the autumn term to boost their progress. Procedures and practices for all aspects of child protection, safeguarding and health and safety are robust. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a secure and safe place to be. Arrangements for children starting Reception are very good and the school forges strong relationships with parents. As a result, children settle quickly into school routines.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, together with the assistant headteacher, provides very good leadership and she has the full support of all staff. She is very strongly committed to raising standards and is very perceptive about what needs to be done to achieve this. The school development plan is based on an analysis of performance in the national tests and other identified needs of the school. Raising standards are the aim but this is not made clear in the targets for success. Through its very largely accurate self-evaluation, the school has a good understanding of how well it is doing. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection, including higher standards and a better learning environment because, to the school, all pupils matter. The views of parents and pupils are sought, valued and acted on appropriately, such as parents' suggestions for providing milk for all pupils who want it. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They know the school well and support and challenge the school's management effectively, particularly by asking searching questions at meetings and at the annual staff/governor day conference which focuses on the development plan.

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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?	2
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?	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?	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	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

Bridekirk Dovenby C of E Primary School

Dovenby

Cockermouth

Cumbria

CA13 0PG

12 January 2007

Dear Children

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and was very impressed by your friendliness, politeness, behaviour and your confidence especially when pupils in Year 6 were using computers to check on and improve their reading skills.

I know you are proud of your good school and really enjoy coming because

- the teaching is good and you are very keen to answer questions in lessons and behave well
- you are proud and eager to take on responsibilities such as being members of your school council and acting as buddies to younger children
- you appreciate all the help you get from the school to help you to make good progress in your learning and attain standards higher than those found in most schools
- you enjoy lessons and other learning opportunities, including the visitors who come to school and the visits you make, such as literacy, mathematics and music lessons that I saw and the visit to London
- the school cares for each and every one of you 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

- you could do better in your writing so that it is as good as your reading
- your understanding about the people of the many different cultures in our country could be better.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison

The Inspector