



Burlington CofE School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112281
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289235
Inspection date 1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Brian Blake HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Kirkby-in-Furness, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	4-11		LA17 7UH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 889210
Number on roll (school)	50	Fax number	01229 889210
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Jackie Fallows
		Headteacher	Mrs Jan Bath
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors visiting the school for one day. The school's self-evaluation was used extensively before the visit to formulate key lines of enquiry that were discussed with the headteacher and governor representatives. Inspection time was used to scrutinise key documents and selected school policies, observe lessons and talk with children about their work.

Description of the school

Burlington is a very small rural primary school with three mixed aged classes; one Reception/Years 1/2 class, one Years 3/4 class, and one Years 5/6 class. Almost all pupils come from the immediate catchment area, and are of White British heritage. The school has a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and a below average number of those entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils complete all their primary education at the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Burlington is a good school, providing a good standard of education for its pupils. The statement in the school brochure that sets the aspiration for the school to be at the heart of the local community is a reality, and is recognised by parents, one of whom said: 'The school plays an important part in the local community, and we strongly support it'. Pupils also value highly all that the school does, and throughout the inspection day, pupils of all ages spoke eloquently and enthusiastically about what the school means to them-'Its fun-I enjoy school because I play outside with all of my friends'; 'We help each other when we get stuck'; 'It's a kind place with really kind teachers.'

Being a very small school has both advantages and disadvantages, but because leadership in Burlington is effective, and staff share a common purpose to provide the best possible education for all pupils, the school is able to minimise the negative aspects and maximise the positive.

The very small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that the performance of a single child can significantly influence standards on entry to the school, the end of key stage results, and the progress made during time at the school. Being small also means that everyone knows everyone else, which at Burlington is fostering very positive relationships and a work environment that is conducive for learning. Parents appreciate fully the advantages of being a very small rural school, and as one commented: 'I find the teachers and all staff very approachable, always willing to discuss the needs of the children and I feel that my views as a parent are valued and the teachers take an interest in what is being done with the children at home. It is nice to see the children's books marked and comments made by teachers that are encouraging and not pointing out mistakes.'

Variations in pupils' performance have occurred in recent years, but the trend is generally positive. The most recent national test results show that children make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that by the time they start Key Stage 1, their overall standard is marginally above average. At Key Stages 1 and 2, standards are significantly better than average in the combined core subjects, and Key Stage 2 science in particular. Overall, progress is better than average because of the higher than expected rate of progress in mathematics and science.

The curriculum meets all necessary requirements and is carefully planned to meet the needs of mixed-aged classes. Teachers use a variety of different grouping strategies to ensure that the pupils are able to enjoy their work, and make the progress expected. The pupils are very well known to the adults who work in the school, which helps ensure that all aspects of care and personal well-being are outstanding.

With the exception of improving the quality and clarity of the success measures and activities for action in the school improvement plan, there is little else that the school needs to do other than maintain its open relationship with parents, its high aspirations, and its caring and sensitive approach to all its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make the success measures and activities for action clearer in the school improvement plan as an aid to helping senior managers and governors better monitor the progress of the school over the life of the plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning so that their attainment on entry to Year 1 is marginally above the standard expected. The most recent test results in 2006 show that pupils' standards at both Key Stages 1 and 2 were significantly better than average for the combined core subjects and for Key Stage 2 science in particular. Pupils make good progress during their time at school, especially in mathematics and science. Progress in English is in line with the rate expected nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also perform significantly better than expected, making good overall progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, and characterised by confident, well-rounded and articulate pupils. Pupils understand about healthy eating, which is recognised in the school's achievement of the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities the school offers them to participate in regular exercise through a range of extra-curricular sport. Pupils feel safe because the size of the school ensures that everyone knows everyone else, which encourages positive links between pupils of different ages, from different classes. Regular attendance partly reflects pupils' enjoyment of school life. Pupils feel that their opinions are taken seriously in lessons and in other activities when they are asked for their views about different aspects of the school's work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developing well, and exemplified in their knowledgeable and empathetic awareness of others in the school and the local community. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about the eco work in school, and the way in which they use the school grounds to link with, and embellish, the local habitat. Pupils have a very good understanding of important values such as care, co-operation, respect and good behaviour. The school is an orderly community, and pupils treat their environment in a considerate and safe way.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The small size of the school, and the very good adult to pupil ratio in all classes, means that the teachers, and other adults working in the school, know the pupils very well. Teachers show expertise in managing mixed-aged pupils in single classes, and this helps build very strong and trusting relationships that make for a very positive learning environment. This does not happen by chance. The teachers plan their work thoroughly, and organise lessons to make best use of time and resources. The pupils recognise the efforts being made to make their learning enjoyable, as indicated by one young pupil who said: 'They're (the teachers) good - they keep us well behaved. You get lots of attention because it's a small school'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good. Careful thought is given to the overall provision for pupils, and this is seen in the way lessons are organised to match content as accurately as possible to pupils' needs and abilities, irrespective of them working in mixed-aged classes. Good use is made of different grouping arrangements in lessons to support the curricular provision for pupils of different ages in the same class. The school actively encourages pupils to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, all of which enhance the learning opportunities available.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Everyone knows each other well, which enables the pupils to mix and make friends of different ages, from different classes. Formal monitoring of progress is in place, and is clear and helpful to parents and their children. Safeguarding the pupils is given a high priority. Policies for child protection, race equality and bullying are of a good standard, and are applied robustly throughout the school. This gives the pupils a high level of confidence that staff will treat them fairly, and offer support and appropriate guidance when the need arises. This aspect of the school's work is recognised and praised by a significant number of parents, as exemplified by one who commented: 'Burlington School has been the best school my child could ever go to. The teachers and pupils are brilliant. My child receives the best care possible and I am very grateful to everyone who makes my child's time at school so happy and relaxing.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, quite justifiably, receives very high praise from parents, pupils and staff. As one parent commented: 'The school has a lovely warm atmosphere where everyone knows everyone. Each child has a say and parents are regularly consulted about aspects of the school....I greatly value the relationship I have with the school for the benefit of our family and community.'

Leadership is not complacent, despite all that the school achieves. The self-evaluation form (SEF) shows that senior managers know the strengths and weakness of the school. The school improvement plan is detailed and covers a range of improvement areas that relate adequately to the SEF, but too many of the success measures and activities for action are insufficiently specific. However, staff and governors share a common vision for moving the school forward, and improving all that it does to make the pupils' education fun and rewarding. The governors fulfil their statutory roles well, and are very supportive of the school and the staff in particular. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision are good, and have clearly developed well since the previous inspection. Awareness of important financial matters is good, and senior managers show a keen desire to ensure that all spending achieves the maximum benefit for the pupils. This focused and targeted approach is helping the school to achieve good value for money. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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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	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?	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	2
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	2
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?	1

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

Burlington CofE School

School Road

Kirkby-in-Furness

Cumbria

LA17 7UH

1 March 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for providing me with such an enjoyable day when I recently visited your school.

I watched all of you in your lessons, as well as talking with your teachers, and reading a lot about the good work that the school does. The lessons that I saw were good because of you and your teachers. Your behaviour in lessons was very good. You sit and listen very carefully to what the teachers are telling you, and when you have to complete a work task, you do so enthusiastically. Well done. Your teachers are very thoughtful about what they want you to learn, and they plan your lessons thoroughly to ensure that all of you do the very best that you can.

Because the school is very small, everyone knows each other. This makes you feel safe, and many of you told me that you enjoy being in a small school because you get lots of attention from the teachers and the other adults who help you in your lessons. You also enjoy making friends with children of different ages, from different classes.

Everyone I spoke to during my visit was clearly very proud of the school, and all that it does for you and the local area in which you live. This makes the school special, as many of you told me during the day.

I am not asking the school to do very much to improve apart from being a little clearer about some of the really exciting things that it has planned for the next three years.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and that all of you do the very best that you can.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector