



Cartmel C of E Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112283
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289236
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Aynsome Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands Cumbria, LA11 6PR
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01539 536262
Number on roll (school)	65	Fax number	01539 536262
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Canon Robert Bailey
		Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Firth
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	11–12 January 2007	289236

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school, drawing its pupils from a wide area that mainly provides for tourism and farming. Pupils' attainment at entry is generally above average, including that of the higher than average proportion that join the school after Reception. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The pupils are all of White British heritage, and the proportion eligible for a free school meal is well below average. The school is on two sites, with the playground and hall across the road from the main building. A new headteacher was appointed from September 2006. The school has achieved Healthy School status and has just been awarded the Activemark for physical education provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good and outstanding features. The school has a high reputation locally, and parents rightly praise the care it affords their children. One wrote, 'The staff are very nurturing and have a personal touch for each child.' Care, guidance and support are good, including that for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's strong emphasis on keeping safe and promoting healthy lifestyles is very effective, confirmed by the pupils who say that they feel very safe, eat healthily and stay fit. Their personal development is also a strength, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community, and their excellent social skills prepare them well for future life.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and their achievement is satisfactory. From generally good attainment on entry, they reach above average levels by the end of Year 6 in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. Results in the 2006 tests met the school's targets for Year 6 pupils by maintaining the good levels generally achieved in English, and by improving on the previously weaker picture in mathematics and science. From the school's monitoring data, the current Year 6 is also on track to meet the relevant targets set for them at the end of 2007, and this signifies an upward movement in standards. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and most reach or exceed the nationally expected goals by the time they enter Year 1, despite there being no readily accessible outdoor learning facilities. Year 2 pupils reach above average levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Currently, progress and achievement are good for the Reception children, and satisfactory for Years 1 to 6.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. This leads to satisfactory and sometimes good progress in children's learning. Pupils say that they really enjoy their work, and that the best thing about the school is the staff. High quality working relationships allow lessons to proceed smoothly, and pupils work hard and behave well. However, sometimes they are allowed to produce work which is not always presented well and handwriting can be careless. More effective ways to monitor pupils' progress have been put in place recently, but teachers' day-to-day marking of pupils' work is not yet precise enough to help and challenge pupils to make consistently good progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has put in place measures to improve aspects of teaching and learning to raise standards further. Priorities for the further improvement of the school are relevant and supported by plans of action. The headteacher has already established good relationships with pupils, staff, governors and parents. The school is well-placed to improve from a weakened position since the last inspection. The staff and governors are determined to raise standards further through planned improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Ensure that teachers' marking of pupils' work reflects high expectations, particularly of handwriting and presentation.
- As funds allow, make provision for continuous outdoor learning, especially for children in Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children make good progress in Reception because of the effective teaching and most reach or exceed the expected national goals by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are generally above average and there is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement. However, results fluctuate year-on-year because year groups are often very small. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved steadily from a low point in 2001 and in the 2006 national tests were above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The 2006 national test results at the end of Year 6 were also above average in English, mathematics and science. The pupils have done particularly well in English over the last few years and the slight decline seen in the same period in mathematics and science was halted in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good with some outstanding features. Pupils really enjoy being here, and their attendance is well above average. The school council unanimously cited the staff, lessons and extra activities as the best things about the school. Parents confirm this. The national emphasis on achieving high quality provision in pupils' personal development has been fully taken on by the staff. Pupils respond exceptionally well to learning about healthy living, and they were eager to explain in some detail the ingredients of a healthy packed lunch. They take a full part in the many sporting and adventurous activities provided, leading to the recent award of the Activemark. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The staff's use of the locality to teach children about local culture is very strong. Pupils' social development is excellent as they grow into mature, thoughtful and independent learners, well-prepared for the next stage in their learning. Parents enthuse about the way the staff help the youngest children or new entrants settle so quickly and confidently into school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. When the teaching is most effective, for example in the Reception class, assessment is used well to plan the next steps in learning and work routines are well established. The pupils concentrate well and are keen to do well. The staff have worked successfully to improve the pupils' achievement and are now rightly focusing on improving pupils' writing skills. However, expectations for the presentation of work and the quality of handwriting are sometimes too low. A key strength is in the teachers' and support staff's teamwork, maintained well by the new headteacher who has a significant teaching commitment. They have enthusiastically taken on new monitoring procedures to track pupils' learning and progress more rigorously. However, the marking of pupils' work is not always effective because it does not sufficiently guide pupils on how to improve their work. The raising of teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement is a timely priority in the interim school improvement plan.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, but enrichment activities are good, including the links with other schools and local groups. The pupils and parents marvel at how much is provided outside lessons by so few staff, and rightly congratulate them for it. The staff plan subject teaching on a two-year cycle so that pupils in the mixed age classes do not miss their entitlement in any subject. The staff are currently engaged in a full audit of the curriculum with a view to linking pupils' learning more effectively between subjects, and to improving assessment procedures. Whilst the Foundation stage curriculum is covered effectively, opportunities for spontaneous outdoor learning are hampered by the lack of facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils are very well looked after and their care and well-being are a key priority in the school. Pupils' well-being is constantly promoted, and all required safety and safeguarding measures are in place. All staff demonstrate high levels of commitment and are willing to go the 'extra mile' to meet the pupils' personal needs. They have gained the confidence of the pupils, who say they always have someone to turn to if there is a problem. Good quality relationships exist within school, and ensure that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive the support that matches their needs. Support staff willingly participate in professional development to continually improve the quality of support they are able to provide. Assessment and tracking procedures are being developed to improve the quality of academic support received by the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has created a common sense of purpose amongst the staff. The most notable recent improvements include the clearly recorded assessment data and targets for pupils' progress. Improved monitoring and evaluation procedures illustrate the renewed drive to raise standards further.

Improvement since the last inspection has been mixed, but is satisfactory overall. Governors recognise that they have been supportive but not sufficiently questioning of the school in the past. They have welcomed new sub-committee arrangements and recently adopted procedures to monitor the school's work more closely. The school has harnessed the useful experience of new governors to support and challenge the school more effectively. The staff appreciate the opportunity to develop their leadership and management skills further, although these developments have had insufficient time to affect outcomes in pupils' learning and standards significantly. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the action to be taken. Unspent financial resources have been targeted on key priorities, which include improvements to the accommodation. Some has already been spent effectively to improve resources for information and communication technology. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has good capacity to improve.

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	2
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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

Cartmel CofE Primary School

Aynsome Road

Cartmel

Grange-over-Sands

Cumbria

LA11 6PR

16 January 2007

Dear Children

You may remember that I visited your school recently to check how well it cares for you, and how well it helps you to learn.

First, let me thank you for your warm and friendly Cartmel CE Primary welcome. You helped me to understand how your school works to help you, and your School Council gave me a strong idea of how much you all enjoy your time there.

Your parents also told me that yours is a school that looks after everybody really well. I agree. I think that your school provides a satisfactory education for you, with good and sometimes excellent features. You behave well, generally try hard in lessons, and make the staff and your parents proud of you when you go out on visits. I was pleased to hear so many of you tell me how you take great care to eat healthily and keep safe: you are certainly careful when crossing the road to the playground. With the staff's and your parents' help, you learn to work and play together exceptionally well.

Sometimes, some of your handwriting looks careless, and I think that you could try harder to present your work more carefully. I have asked the staff to help you write more neatly, and also give you clearer guidance in how to improve your work when they mark it. This is because I know that you could do even better if you expected more of yourselves. I feel sure that your school will continue to get better and that you will help too by doing your best. When there is enough money, I agree with all of you that outdoor learning areas would be a great addition to your facilities.

Thank you again for looking after me so well.

With best wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson

Lead Inspector