



Captain Shaw's C of E School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112290
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289238
Inspection date 10 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bootle, Millom
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cumbria, LA19 5TG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 718279
Number on roll (school)	26	Fax number	01229 718386
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Debbie Collinson
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Webber
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	10 October 2006	289238

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school with two classes, each of which has more than one age group. A small proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal and this reflects a local area that has little social and economic disadvantage. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment, but the very small numbers often include a wide range of abilities. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The teaching staff of the school has changed completely in the last two years. Very few pupils move in or out of the school at other than the usual times, but the population is falling.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that it is satisfactory. Furthermore, the school is right to identify pupils' personal development as a strength that is promoted by the good care shown for all its pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and show a caring and considerate attitude to one another. They recognise that this is fostered by the good adult role models in the school. A school councillor put it clearly: 'Everybody is nice and on their best behaviour.' She is absolutely right because behaviour and relationships in the school are excellent. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good.

Children have a sound start in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and make satisfactory progress. Standards reached by Year 6 pupils are average. Care needs to be exercised in interpreting this information because of the very small number of pupils in a typical year group. One pupil often represents a quarter of the pupils in that year. More important is how well pupils are doing from their various starting points: school records and national data show pupils to be making satisfactory progress. The strongest areas are reading, mathematics and science, but standards and progress in writing are not good enough. In particular, the inconsistent use of assessment data means that pupils' learning targets are not as clear as they should be. Furthermore, teachers are not marking work strictly to the targets so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is no more than satisfactory. Pupils' sound basic skills and good attitudes to school and work ensure that they are well prepared for future schooling and the world beyond.

The good curriculum is particularly effective in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of their personal needs, such as developing a healthy lifestyle. The result is the school being awarded Healthy School and Activemark status. The school is developing a good team approach that includes a wide range of contributors, such as governors who provide skills in areas such as music and information and communication technology (ICT). Parents are highly supportive of the school and appreciate the way that pupils make a good contribution to the close-knit local community.

Satisfactory leadership and management are playing an increasingly important role in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders are also correct in their view that the school has developed strong systems for assessing pupils' achievements but that these have not had enough time to impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. The reorganisation of the staff means that staff are making better use of their strengths and having a positive impact on learning. The school development plan has appropriate priorities, but the measures of success do not often focus on the impact initiatives are intended to have on pupils' standards and achievements. This has led to the overestimation of some areas, such as the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Quickly implement the consistent use of target-setting in lesson planning and marking, in order to inform pupils of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Sharpen the success criteria in the school improvement plan so that they focus on the intended impact on pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Across the school, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception and most reach the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Those children with language or maturity delays who do not reach the expected level make good progress from their starting point. These children benefit greatly from the school's supportive ethos. Progress is steady for the vast majority of pupils as they move through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and often make good gains from their various starting points. Good support from outside agencies, such as the speech therapist, also plays a key part in their achievements. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach expected levels and make satisfactory progress. Results are weaker in writing.

By the end of Year 6, standards are average. In English, the good standards in reading make up for the weaker showing in writing. Provisional results from the 2006 national tests show that pupils made the expected gains from their previous results in Year 2. Boys did better than girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Particularly strong are social and moral developments that foster high quality behaviour and relationships. Older pupils have good opportunities to take care of the younger ones and show a good sense of responsibility. This leads to safe play and a sense of belonging. Pupils say they like to contribute to the village community and they recognise the hardships faced by many people in other parts of the world. As a result, they raise funds for places in Africa, for example. Pupils eat healthily and take part in vigorous exercise from an early age. Pupils' future economic prospects are enhanced by their positive attitudes and the sound acquisition of basic learning skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and learning. This is because they benefit from the hard work of staff who seek to improve their practice. Typical features in lessons are:

- detailed planning and clear learning objectives that ensure pupils know what they are expected to learn
- helpful use of the much improved ICT facilities, particularly for pupils with extra learning needs who progress well
- good classroom management that leads to good concentration and few disruptions
- effective work from classroom assistants, particularly for the youngest children and the most vulnerable.

The information from the good procedures for assessing pupils is used adequately in subjects like mathematics and science. Consequently, recent evidence shows that pupils make most progress in these subjects. In writing, such data are not being used consistently, or well enough, to set learning targets that will promote good progress. Where targets are identified, they are not sharp enough to promote good progress, or form a good basis for marking.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets requirements. Reception children benefit from the full range of Foundation Stage activities. Many aspects of the curriculum make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and these are further enhanced by the contributions from external providers. Pupils' all-round development is enhanced by their effective learning in music and art. Pupils rightly praise the good enrichment activities and they thoroughly enjoy visits and visitors. Provision for ICT has improved markedly and standards are rising. The use of ICT in learning about other subjects is becoming a strength.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding the children are good, including child protection practices. Parents and children welcome greatly the safe and secure environment. The effective monitoring of behaviour, attendance and individual needs means that challenges are identified quickly and overcome. Teachers know their pupils well. Strong support is received from a range of outside agencies when the need occurs. The good procedures for monitoring pupils' achievement are beginning to contribute well to teaching quality. A developing area is the way that pupils' targets for improvement are becoming more influential in teachers' planning, particularly in mathematics. Analysis of pupils' answers

on national test papers are highlighting common shortcomings in their learning. However, individual targets are not applied consistently, for example in areas such as writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

This is a school that is going through change, including changes in management, staffing and falling rolls. Effective leadership by the headteacher has maintained the strengths the school, such as its very positive ethos. In addition, clear improvements are evident in ICT, assessment and the greater focus on improvement planning. The headteacher is well supported by governors and hard-working staff who want to improve. The priorities identified in the school improvement plan are the right ones. As a result, improvement is well established and the capacity to improve further is good. Some of the criteria for measuring success are weak, such as those about improving pupils' progress. The school's effective self-evaluation procedures and plans show clearly that there is more to do. The process of review benefits from the regular input of parents, pupils and the local authority. Financial management is prudent. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and bring a great deal of relevant expertise to their role but they do not have sufficiently robust formal procedures to contribute independently to the school improvement plan.

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	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?	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	1
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	3

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?	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?	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

Captain Shaw's CofE School

Main Street

Bootle

Millom

Cumbria

LA19 5TG

10 October 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and hearing your views about the school. It was good to see you hard at work in lessons. I believe it is important that you know what the judgements are about your school and what the report will be telling your parents and the government.

What I really liked about your school:

- the good progress made by children with learning difficulties and disabilities
- your good attitudes to school and the work that you are given
- your excellent behaviour and relationships you develop
- the way you play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy
- the important contribution that you make to the running of the school and the contribution that you make through donations to charity
- the good art and music teaching throughout the school
- the strong support that your parents give to the school.

There are a few ways that will help you to achieve even better standards.

- You need to improve your writing skills.
- The marking of your work should do more to help you understand how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further.
- The school improvement plan needs to be clearer about how successful teachers want you to be.

You can help by working hard and making every effort to do your very best. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector