



# Low Furness CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112299  
**Local Authority** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 289240  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Pat Kime HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Great Urswick, Ulverston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Cumbria, LA12 0TA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 894135
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	106	<b>Fax number</b>	01229 894136
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Rev Colin Honour
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Longstaffe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2004		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7–8 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 289240
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This smaller than average school draws pupils from several villages and the surrounding rural community. The number of pupils has risen by nearly a fifth since the last inspection. All the pupils are of White British heritage. A lower than average proportion of pupils is in receipt of free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Twenty-four of the pupils are in Nursery. They attend part-time, joining the Reception pupils for either morning or afternoon sessions.

The school holds several awards including a Silver Artsmark and it has Healthy Schools' accreditation.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school has improved considerably since it was last inspected two years ago. It now provides a good education with pastoral care and provision for pupils' personal development that are outstanding. What has been achieved in two years, through the headteacher's very good leadership and the hard work of staff, shows that the school has the capacity to improve still further.

The key factor in the school's success is the improved quality of teaching. The vast majority of teaching is now good and some is outstanding. This improvement has resulted in pupils making better progress and achieving well. The headteacher has been instrumental in bringing this about. When children start, usually in Nursery, their attainment is typical for their age. They settle to school life quickly and make sound progress in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). By the time they start Year 1, they have reached the standard expected at their age. Pupils progress well in Key Stage 1 where teaching is at least good overall and some is outstanding. Standards are now above average by Year 6. The present Year 6 pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 2. Better teaching has enabled the school to raise standards in mathematics significantly and overcome earlier underachievement.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They develop personal attributes and skills, which will stand them in good stead for their future lives. They are very happy at the school. They enjoy learning and want to do well. Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils feel safe and confident in school. Pupils learn about citizenship through the part they play in the life of the school and the wider community. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

The school has a distinctively Christian ethos. It provides a good curriculum that is planned to avoid repetition in mixed-age classes and is enriched by many educational visits and visitors and a very good range of clubs.

The leadership and management of the school are good overall, with leadership better than management. The headteacher has led the drive to improve teaching, raise standards and minimise underachievement very effectively; thus dealing with two of the issues from the previous inspection. In this, she has been supported well by governors who have a good knowledge of the school's work, and by good teamwork from the staff. The headteacher provides staff with a very good model of effective teaching. She has ensured that staff receive additional training to sharpen their teaching skills. To improve further, the school needs to fully resolve the other two issues from the previous inspection, those related to the use of assessment data and planning for school improvement. Nearly all parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire and the overwhelming majority have a very positive view of the school. Typical plaudits described Low Furness as a 'warm, welcoming school', which they have recommended to friends.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Marshall the information it holds on pupils' progress better so that it can check more easily whether all pupils do as well as they can as they move up the school.
- Refine the planning for school improvement so that it:
  - is clear what the most important current priorities are
  - provides a longer-term perspective
- Improve children's rate of progress in the Foundation Stage.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school has overcome pupils' underachievement. Pupils are now making good progress and achieving well. This was confirmed by the standards seen in lessons and the work in pupils' books. All pupils, boys and girls, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the more able, progress equally well.

When children start the school most can do what is typical for children of their age. The school's records show that children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and most of the Reception group are on course to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they move into Year 1. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is good in the Foundation Stage.

Standards in Year 2 have risen each year since the last inspection. Work in the current Year 2 is at a slightly above average standard and this represents good achievement from the pupils' starting points.

Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 has improved and is now good. In 2006, the Year 6 pupils' results in the national end of key stage tests (SATs) were well above the national average. But these pupils were well ahead at the end of Key Stage 1 so their progress in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. The present Year 6 pupils have made better progress. They were a little behind average at the end of Key Stage 1 but are now working at an above average standard in English and mathematics. In mathematics, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 fell in 2004 and 2005. The school tackled this issue very effectively.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. Their behaviour is exemplary. Relationships among the pupils and between pupils and staff are extremely good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life and learning with their friends. Attendance has improved in the last year and is now good. By Year 6, pupils are confident, thoughtful and responsible young people who are well-equipped to continue learning and to contribute to the community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and desire to achieve were borne out by comments from Year 6. They understand the importance of 'striving' to do well. They were proud of tackling problems which they knew were at Year 7 level, saying, 'We don't just give up!'

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to make wise choices that help them keep healthy and safe. They remember what they have been taught on the 'Kidsafe' programme. They put the lessons they have learned about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise into practice very well. They are very knowledgeable about healthy eating.

The school is very much part of the local community with pupils involved in village life. For instance, they participate in several Church events. They undertake 'litter picks', which enhance the neighbourhood and help them understand the importance of recycling. Pupils also play a major part in school life. For example, they take on many jobs that contribute to the smooth day-to-day running of the school and they contribute to decisions about developments, such as improving outdoor provision and planning a sensory garden.

Pupils are well-prepared for their future economic well-being, primarily through the acquisition of basic skills and personal attributes and good opportunities to learn about the world of work and local industries.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good overall and pupils are keen learners. Most teaching is good, some satisfactory and some outstanding. This was evident from the seven lessons seen, pupils' achievement, and the work in their books.

Throughout the school, staff have very positive relationships with pupils and lessons are enjoyable, purposeful and well-organised. Teachers use displays in the classrooms very effectively to showcase pupils' work and to support their learning. Teachers plan lessons carefully, expect a lot of their pupils and provide interesting activities to help them learn. They make sure pupils know what they are to learn in each lesson but only in the most effective lessons are pupils told clearly how they will recognise if they have succeeded. Marking usually indicates how well pupils have grasped the main point of the work but it less often sets targets for children to help them do better. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes and teachers are careful to match work to their different needs. In the Foundation Stage, the direct teaching of groups is often good but opportunities are missed to promote learning through the activities provided for children to choose from.

The teaching of mathematics has improved. Teachers have benefited from additional training. In the lessons seen, they showed a good understanding of how to teach the subject and they improved pupils' understanding of calculation methods and their ability to solve mathematical problems improved.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) as an integral part of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the previous inspection.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum, which meets all requirements fully. It is carefully planned to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes cover everything they should and do not repeat anything. Planning for pupils to acquire new skills across all subjects is not so systematic and depends on teachers building this aspect into their daily lesson plans. The curriculum is enriched with many educational visits and visitors. There is a very good range of clubs for such a small school, including several at which the younger pupils are welcome or are just for them. All pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are taught to swim and are learning Spanish.

The school provides well-targeted and effective support for pupils who need extra help to achieve their best and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consequently, these pupils progress as well as their classmates.

The school provides very well for pupils' personal development through its very caring and Christian ethos, planned activities such as the outdoor activities for older pupils and very good pastoral care. Pupils learn that their contribution to the school and the wider community counts and can make a difference. Cultural awareness is enhanced well by the link with a school in Ghana.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pastoral care is outstanding and academic support and guidance good. The school works well with external agencies to meet pupils' needs. The arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements fully.

Pupils feel safe at school because the adults know them very well and take very good care of them and the older pupils look out for the younger ones. These are important factors in pupils' enjoyment of school. There is a very good programme of personal, social and health education that helps pupils to make safe and healthy choices about diet, exercise, relationships and drugs.

Teachers assess pupils' progress well during lessons and give them immediate feedback to help them improve. This is not so often the case when they mark pupils' work. Staff go to great lengths to give extra help to pupils who need a boost and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to provide challenge for the most able.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall, though leadership is the more effective aspect. The headteacher has vision for the school, which is shared by governors. She

leads teaching very well and, as a result, there is now a greater proportion of good teaching than at the last inspection. Improvement is evident, for example, in teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning and their knowledge of how best to teach mathematics. This improvement has had a knock-on positive effect on pupils' achievement.

The school evaluates its performance and takes effective action to tackle weaker aspects of its work. For instance, the headteacher observes teachers at work and gives them useful pointers for improvement. A decline in test results in mathematics was halted by a whole-school focus on strengthening the teaching of aspects of the subject in which pupils had done least well. Subject leaders' evaluations of work across the school are good. A programme of regular tests for pupils has been introduced and teachers know how well the pupils in their class are doing. However, information from assessments is not collated to provide a check on each pupil's progress over time and inform decisions about priorities for improvement.

Since the previous inspection, the most urgent areas for improvement have been dealt with very effectively. Planning for the school's further improvement is satisfactory. The teachers are appropriately involved in the process but the resulting plan is not sufficiently sharply focused. Many activities are planned, almost all for the current year, and it is not easy for staff to identify which are the most pressing priorities and how they are to be achieved.

Governors have a good knowledge of the school's work. They visit regularly and have meetings with teachers who lead work in various subjects of the curriculum. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and balance support and challenge.

The school has overspent its budget in order to employ experienced teachers and has a large deficit. However, it has a plan, agreed with the local authority, to eliminate the deficit over five years.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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

The School Council

Low Furness CofE Primary School

Church Road

Great Urswick

Ulverston

Cumbria

LA12 0TA

7 November 2006

Dear Pupils

As you know, I came to your school recently, with John Rutherford, to find out how well all the children are learning. Everyone made us welcome and helped us to find out about your school. I was very grateful to all the children who talked to John and me and told us a lot about school and their work. Please thank them for us.

This letter is to tell you what I found out. Please make sure that all the children know what it says.

Your school is better now than the last time inspectors came, two years ago. It is now giving you a good education. You are making good progress in your learning and you are growing into confident, responsible young people.

These are the things that are particularly good at your school:

- the teachers know exactly what they want you to learn. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable and you work very hard in them
- you are extremely well-behaved. You really enjoy everything on offer at school and you get involved in lots of activities outside your lessons and in the village
- you have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe
- you are looked after very well at school
- your headteacher has made sure that the teaching has improved and that's the main reason why you are now doing so well.

To make your school even better I have asked the staff and governors to:

- keep a better check on how well you are learning as you move up the school. They have lots of information about this but it needs to be organised better
- have a better plan for how they are going to keep on improving the school
- help the children in Nursery and Reception make good progress.

I am sure that you will help with ideas of your own about how to improve the school.

You have my very best wishes for the future. I hope you continue enjoying school and that you do as well as you can at Low Furness and when you move on to secondary school.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools