

Calthwaite CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112301
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289241
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Karen Ling HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	67
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Charles Ecroyd
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Ann Steel
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001
School address	Calthwaite Penrith Cumbria CA11 9QT
Telephone number	01768 885277
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in a small rural village on the edge of the Eden Valley. It is situated between Penrith and Carlisle.

Pupils attending the school represent a range of economic and social backgrounds. Almost half live outside the catchment area. The proportion of pupils eligible to claim free school meals is below the national average. All pupils are of White British backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below the national average. A very small proportion has a statement of special educational need. The school is accredited with the Activemark Gold award for physical education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Together with the dedicated team of teachers and support staff, a happy environment is provided where pupils achieve well. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils are very well mannered and behaviour is of a high standard. Personal development is outstanding because so much is done to enhance pupils' experiences in school and in the wider community. The extent to which pupils contribute to the local community, for example, through performances and fundraising activities is exemplary considering the size of the school. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and the Activemark Gold award reflects the importance the school places on the benefits of sport. Pupils keenly explain why they enjoy school so much. For example, one child said it is because teachers make learning fun. Safety procedures are robust and adhered to and pupils say they feel safe at school. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute significantly to their well-being and the effective links with local colleges and schools prepare them well for secondary school and their future lives.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and as a result children make good progress. They achieve well because the care they receive helps them feel secure and confident in their surroundings. A rich and varied curriculum provides a good foundation for Key Stage 1.

The standards pupils reach by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 each year depend very much on the individual abilities of the small number of pupils in each year group. Occasionally, they are broadly average, but more often they are well above average. In all years groups, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Teaching and learning across the school are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of each child and although they generally monitor their involvement in activities effectively, in some whole class sessions this is less consistently achieved. The good support provided helps them to move on in their learning, though written comments do not always set high expectations for writing standards. Procedures to track pupils' progress are well embedded and used effectively to set challenging targets.

Although there were no areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly. The very good use of ICT across the school enhances learning in effective and exciting ways. The school has undergone major refurbishment in recent years and this also has had a significant impact on the quality of provision.

The school's self-evaluation is thorough and development plans are effective.

The extent to which the governing body monitors the work of the school is developing appropriately as more members become involved in all areas of school life. The staff and governors are keen to improve and tirelessly seek funding to source building improvements and other curricular activities. However, the deficit budget has yet to be resolved. The leadership of the headteacher and the improvements in governance, together with consistent good levels of achievement, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor more closely the quality of written comments made for pupils and the involvement of all pupils during whole class activities.
- Ensure the plans for clearing the deficit budget are carried through robustly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with levels of attainment similar to those of most children their age. Children of all abilities achieve well. The numbers of pupils in each year group are small, typically between six and ten, so individual differences between pupils are a very important factor in comparing the standards pupils reach at the end of each key stage. Because of this, it is inappropriate to relate trends in standards to the quality of provision. Children make good progress and by the end of Foundation Stage attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and personal, social and emotional attributes are exceptionally well developed. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. The 2006 test results for Key Stage 1 show standards of achievement to be well above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. Good progress continues at Key Stage 2 and most pupils achieve above national average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high levels of support and regular monitoring of achievement. Challenging targets are set for all pupils and these are regularly exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are very friendly and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance record. They try very hard at everything they do in class and in the extensive range of activities provided for them. They show high levels of maturity and consideration for others in the way they conduct themselves in and beyond the school. The care and consideration older pupils show to younger ones is exemplary; they are very responsible. The school house system works very well and pupils set high expectations for their own behaviour and contributions. Agendas for meetings show how they address issues. For example, they want to make sure their school is free from bullying. As one captain wrote, 'I hope to make school more fun for all the pupils.' Pupils develop a very good understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Most eat the healthy meals at lunchtime prepared at school using local produce. They learn how to keep safe. For example, they know the importance of wearing reflective jackets when crossing the road to and from the out of school provision. They contribute enormously to the immediate and wider community. They have visited the theatre and have put on Shakespeare productions for family and villagers. They raise money for a number of charities. Through the many visits to local secondary schools for sporting activities, along with enterprise activities arranged by a local college, pupils feel they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils gain from being taught by specialist teachers of music and sports coaches as well as their regular teachers and the headteacher. Teaching assistants also play an important role and give high levels of support within the classroom and in small group work outside the classroom. Very good relationships exist at all levels. Teachers are well organised and plan differentiated work that matches pupils' capabilities. This means that all

groups of pupils are provided for effectively. In all years, pupils make good progress. Teachers set challenging targets and regularly remind pupils what they need to do to move on and improve their work further. Sometimes the standard of their written comments do not set the best example to pupils. Teachers use a range of strategies to hold pupils' interest; they make learning fun but on occasions do not monitor how well all pupils are involved in activities. Teachers are particularly skilled in using ICT to enhance learning. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 looked at large photographs of castles projected onto the screen in a geography lesson, while Key Stage 2 pupils visited Mexico by aeroplane using an interactive website.

Young children in Reception get off to a very good start. They quickly settle into school because of the close care and attention they receive from their teachers and other pupils. They manage well and show developing independence during the lesson time they spend with Key Stage 1 pupils and when they move into the activity room. Teachers and support staff plan a wide and interesting range of activities which are appropriate to their stage of development. For example, after checking on the animals in their veterinary surgery they embarked on a spring walk in the village.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The pupils' love of school and excitement about learning is fostered by a curriculum of outstanding quality. This meets all statutory requirements and is successfully extended by an impressive range of additional activities. Staff arrange visits to local secondary schools, colleges and sports centres where pupils develop their physical skills and take part in a variety of sporting and personal development events. Visits, for example to the theatre, a cheese making farm and a problem-solving day at Newton Rigg College, enable pupils to learn through first hand experiences. They benefit hugely from these events and excitedly recount what they have been learning when asked. They enjoy having visitors to the school, such as a puppet maker and local artists and produce art to a very high standard. An animal welfare officer visited younger pupils and showed them how to look after pets, while the local farmer brought an incubator and eggs as part of their 'New Life' topic.

The teaching of Spanish has recently been introduced at Year 3. Pupils are eager to learn and their enthusiasm as they ask and answer questions is infectious. The school is very inclusive. For example, girls and boys take part in competitions including tag rugby and dance.

Since the last inspection, out of school care has been established adjacent to the school, which offers a service either side of the school day and during the school holidays. This is used well by pupils who attend the school. The addition of this service, along with the Nursery provision, is a welcome and valuable support for families at the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils is of paramount importance. Pupils know this and speak highly of those who look after them. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and staff establish a friendly rapport with pupils. Staff set very good role models to pupils and in turn the older pupils to younger ones. As a result, pupils become thoughtful and well rounded individuals. The support for the more vulnerable, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is very good. Teachers and assistants are dedicated and committed to providing the best support possible. Formal arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in

place. Staff value pupils' contributions and efforts and work very hard to help move them on in their learning. Robust systems that track academic progress and set challenging targets are in place. Staff use assessments effectively to check and review individual progress. They refer pupils to their targets in their day-to-day work, give clear instructions and individual attention where necessary and pupils are guided in how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management for the school. She has had a huge and positive impact on the life and work of the school in her 18 years at the school. Together with a dedicated and experienced staff, a wonderful learning environment has been created for pupils. Staff undertake responsibility for curriculum areas, which they manage successfully. The limitations of the outdoor space have not proved to be an obstacle. The monumental garden, wildlife and wooded areas, together with the adventure playground are evidence of this. The extensions to the school, which have taken place since the last inspection, have enhanced the learning environment immensely. Resources are good and continually being developed.

Much of the enrichment which contributes to the quality of provision is a direct result of the school's hard work and determination to secure extra funding. This has ensured that though this is a small rural school, the innovative curriculum ensures that it is part of the wider community and the pupils develop a good knowledge of the wider world. The ethos created by the headteacher is one of inclusiveness and based on a genuine care and interest in the success of pupils at the school. Many of the positive comments recorded by parents are testimony to the high regard parents have for the headteacher and staff. Staff know what pupils and parents think of the school and make good efforts to take on board their views.

The governing body is developing its involvement in the work of the school and satisfactorily holds the school to account. The school currently runs a deficit budget. This is accounted for by the loss of some funding and the fluctuating numbers of pupils on the school roll. However, a projected forecast linked to strategic planning seeks to clear this deficit. At present the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

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?	1
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?	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	1

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?	1
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.

Annex A

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	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Calthwaite CofE School

Calthwaite

Penrith

Cumbria

CA11 9QT

22 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Do you remember when I visited your school recently? I came to see how well you were doing. Thank you for being so helpful and courteous. I really enjoyed talking with you. You had so many positive things to tell me about your school, which you clearly enjoy. I'm not surprised either. I saw so many interesting activities and lessons while I was there.

I decided that Calthwaite CofE School is a good school with outstanding features. It is giving you a very good start in life. I was pleased to see how you get on with your teachers and the hard work they put into planning lessons for you. Mrs Steel and the teachers have developed the school over the years making it a wonderful place to learn in. I liked the outside gardens, woods and play areas too. You are very lucky to have so many lovely places to play and relax in. Your teachers give you a strong foundation in reading, writing, mathematics and other important subjects. I was really impressed with the number of visits and excursions on offer, such as the recent skiing trip to Italy. These things make learning even more fun for you. You have many sport, music, dance and drama opportunities and I know how proud your teachers are of all your efforts. You make good use of these opportunities and that is why you are so well prepared for the future and the next stage in your education by the time you are in Year 6.

I found very few areas where the school might do better. I thought that your teachers could monitor more closely how well you all take part in class activities and the comments they make in your books to help you improve your work.

Well done everyone. Keep up all your good work and continue to make every effort to do your best for yourself and for your school.

Best wishes.

• Yours sincerely,

Karen Ling

Lead Inspector