



Shap Endowed C of E Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112328
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289247
Inspection dates 2–3 November 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Scott

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Main Street |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Shap, Penrith |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | Cumbria, CA10 3NL |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01931 716274 |
| Number on roll (school) | 120 | Fax number | 01931 716447 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Elizabeth Grose |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Lois Whittaker |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 April 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school catering for pupils from a comparatively remote village and surrounding rural area. Socio-economic conditions are below the national average. The pupil population is reasonably stable, although numbers are steadily rising, mainly because of new housing. Pupils are all from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Shap Primary School is a satisfactory but improving school. It is emerging creditably from a period when achievement by Year 6 was inadequate. Now, except in mathematics, standards are broadly average and pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. The headteacher's good leadership has established a clear sense of purpose throughout the school; teachers' planning has improved and attendance is better. A happy, positive, Christian ethos pervades the school and this is valued by the local community. Parents are certainly very pleased with what the school is doing for their children.

Pupils develop into thoroughly likeable and decent individuals. They are open, considerate and kind to one another in lessons and in the playground. They enjoy a healthy lifestyle, through sensible choices at lunchtime and vigorous activity. All pupils, for example, take the wake-up and shake-up activity before school very seriously. There is a strong sense of community and a close bond with the church, so that pupils carry out school duties reliably and are generous about others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils appreciate the high level of care from all staff.

Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well and reach most of their expected learning goals, because of high expectations and careful planning. By Years 2 and 6, their attainment is broadly average. Pupils' preparation for their next school is, therefore, satisfactory even though the school has not yet succeeded in improving performance in mathematics by Year 6. The school is well aware of weaknesses in calculation and problem-solving, and its strategies are beginning to succeed in raising standards.

Teaching is satisfactory and is good in lessons that are brisk, business-like and well planned. Teachers generate a good atmosphere in their classrooms, explain new learning clearly and provide a reasonable level of challenge. However, they do not provide sufficient scope for pupils to become independent learners which would help achievement, especially in mathematics. Teachers have good systems to check pupils' progress but do not always use this data consistently to set challenging but achievable learning goals for them.

The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. However, the good, perceptive leadership of the headteacher inspires pupils, motivates staff and reassures parents. The school has a clear and appropriate direction, and senior staff are playing an increasingly important role. Parents value that 'teachers are incredibly supportive to parents and pupils.' Plans for improvement are good, but they are not monitored rigorously enough by the headteacher, senior staff and governors to ensure that the planned pace of change is always quick enough. The school provides satisfactory value for money and is in a good position to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils become more independent in their calculation and problem-solving work.

- Develop a consistent approach to helping pupils understand exactly how they can improve their work.
- Be more rigorous in evaluating the school's development to ensure that the expected pace of improvement is quick enough.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of boys and girls is satisfactory by the time they leave the school. Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are below average, especially in language, mathematics and awareness of the wider world. They mostly make good progress because of effective teaching and, in 2006, children achieved the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year in all areas except language.

By Year 2 pupils' progress is satisfactory. Standards have tended to be below average but in 2005 standards rose sharply to above average, notably in reading and writing, because this was a higher attaining group at entry. In 2006, the school's results showed a fall in standards. This was a very small year group with several pupils with learning difficulties and they made at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. The school's records indicate that pupils in the current Year 2 are working at nationally expected levels and inspection evidence indicates that they make at least satisfactory progress in lessons.

By Year 6, standards have varied between average and below average in recent years but achievement has been inadequate. Standards were significantly below average in 2005 because pupils did not have enough skills in, for example, problem-solving in mathematics and investigations in science. In 2006, pupils' performance improved except in mathematics, and this is still a weakness in the current Year 6. The school's data indicate that Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve nationally expected standards in English and science next year. This is supported by the inspection evidence of at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school because they receive well-focused support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop well as individuals. Their good attendance shows how much they like coming to school. Pupils are courteous, thoughtful and well behaved in and out of class. In lessons, they sustain good concentration and clearly enjoy their work, especially in practical or physical activities. The playground is a lively, sociable place where all ages play harmoniously together. They look after one another carefully.

Pupils are eager to adopt a healthy lifestyle, although not all are wholly keen on fresh vegetables at lunchtime. Pupils are proud of their roles around school and gain vital confidence through regular contact beyond the school with the church, local businesses and charity work. Their spiritual awareness and self-esteem develop well, preparing them for the life ahead, although some of their basic skills in mathematics are insecure.

This is linked to their underdeveloped independence in solving problems. Overall, though, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a good atmosphere in lessons so pupils are relaxed and happy to work. Teachers present new learning clearly, although they do not consistently give pupils enough practice to explore new ideas to ensure ready understanding. Pupils appreciate the guidance that teachers provide through their marking and advice in lessons and gain valuable self-belief from the good support of all adults. However, this close support often discourages pupils from thinking for themselves.

Planning is satisfactory with useful allowance for pupils of different abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties especially benefit from learning that builds progressively and is demanding but achievable. However, the overall level of challenge is not always fine-tuned to match the abilities of all pupils. Teaching is often good, including in the Foundation Stage, when high expectations, skilful planning and a lively pace ensure that all pupils learn well. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils were so taken by the story of 'The Gruffalo' that their vocabulary dramatically increased.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum follows standard guidelines and so satisfactorily caters for all topics. Subjects are mainly taught separately, but teachers are increasingly linking subjects to provide good opportunities for reading and writing. The curriculum is, as one parent said, 'rich and varied'. For example, visits to the Science Museum and a synagogue in Manchester, and visitors like an African drummer and Indian dancer clearly improve pupils' personal and cultural development.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because their needs are clearly identified, and individual learning plans are well focused and well supported in class. However, the provision for pupils with special gifts and/or talents is just starting. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good, particularly because children are encouraged to be independent and learn through investigation. The sculptures, environmental area and ample space make the grounds a stimulating outside classroom enjoyed by the children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Formal systems to safeguard pupils are in place and regularly updated. Staff training for key aspects, such as child protection, is kept up to date. The pastoral care is equally strong.

Pupils appreciate that nothing is ever too much trouble for their teachers and that there is always someone to talk to, if necessary.

There are comprehensive and detailed systems that enable teachers to analyse pupils' progress and show where strengths and weaknesses occur. The school uses the data sensibly to channel support in the right place, but not sufficiently to always help pupils understand what the next steps in their learning could be. As a result, pupils are not all wholly aware of how they might improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall leadership of the school is satisfactory. However, the new headteacher's good leadership has brought a sense of renewal to the school, after a period when achievement was weak. She has ensured a positive atmosphere in the school, addressed weaknesses in teaching and begun to improve standards. Senior staff and governors are playing an increasing part in shaping the school's direction.

The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher is very perceptive about the school's needs and has established clear and appropriate priorities that are shared by all staff and governors. However, senior staff are not yet fully involved in monitoring their areas of responsibility. In addition, the school could do more to ensure that the pace of change is sufficiently robust, a concern because the progress since the last inspection has been no better than satisfactory, especially in mathematics.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors, many of whom are new, are very supportive, hard-working and work closely with the headteacher. They hold the school to account at times but do not systematically evaluate its progress. There are good links with parents who have a very high opinion of the school and praise its recent progress. The combined will to improve, the positive ethos and the sensible aspirations show that the school is in good shape to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| 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 | 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 | 2 |
| 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? | 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

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| 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 | 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 | 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

Shap Endowed CofE Primary School

Main Street

Shap

Penrith

Cumbria

CA10 3NL

7 November 2006

Dear Pupils

I am writing to thank you for all your help during my visit to your school. You helped me to get to know your school really well and you made my time in Shap most enjoyable.

I believe that your school gives you a satisfactory education at present. Recently, some of the results at Year 6 have been lower than average, but things are changing and you are beginning to achieve at least satisfactorily. Your headteacher has been the main reason for important changes to the school. This was very clear to me and your parents confirmed it.

There is a positive atmosphere throughout the school and you are very much part of this. You are polite, thoughtful and kind to one another. You take on responsibility sensibly in school and with links outside school. You enjoy a healthy lifestyle, helped by all that fresh air around Shap, although I noticed that you have not all learned to like your vegetables at lunchtime. You behave well, have a positive attitude to your work, and sustain good concentration in lessons.

You have a good start to school life in the Nursery and Reception classes. The standards of your work are generally satisfactory although not always in mathematics. I have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to improve your calculation work and your problem solving. I know you appreciate the advice from teachers about how to improve your work. However, I think you would make faster progress if you all had very clear guidance about the next steps in your learning for the main subjects and I have asked the school to provide this. You can help by remembering your next steps every time you work.

I know that the school takes very good care of you and that you feel safe and valued. Your headteacher and all the adults are working together well to make the school a better place. They need to double-check that the improvements are happening as quickly as they would like, so that your future is bright. I wish you every success!

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector