



Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112357
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289257
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crooklands Brow
School category	Voluntary aided		Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	4–11		LA15 8JH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 897916
Number on roll (school)	103	Fax number	01229 897923
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Father E Cotter
		Headteacher	Mrs N Rielly
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006	Inspection number 289257
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school where pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. The school draws pupils from a wider locality than its immediate neighbourhood and from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The number of pupils taking a free school meal is below average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. A below average number of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had only recently started at the school.

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 excellent ethos enables all pupils to feel appreciated and so they do their very best. Parents praise the calm and welcoming atmosphere. They say that they can see their children blossom, showing a strong sense of identity and values, which will prepare them well for their lives. This is very clear in the daily life of the school where pupils behave well and are very happy. Pupils work hard and have very positive attitudes to learning. Their personal development is outstanding and this leads to a real sense of community. Pupils relate very well to each other and willingly accept responsibilities for small tasks around the school. The school council and children's forum are very influential and have brought about several changes. The healthy tuck shop is one example which is run by the pupils for the pupils and appreciated by all. Pupils are very pleased about their contribution to the school and are extending their efforts to the wider community.

All groups of pupils, including the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The results of national tests at ages seven and eleven show pupils are successful in achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. In response to the teachers' high expectations in Year 6, a good proportion of pupils exceed the level expected for their age and this sustains the overall high standards. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. From an average starting point, children make satisfactory progress to reach the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception class. Children benefit from a variety of practical activities but do not always have enough opportunity for choice and learning through play.

Teaching and learning are good. This quality of teaching accounts for pupils' good achievement. Lessons are well managed and run smoothly. A variety of activities capture pupils' enthusiasm. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk, tasks are challenging and learning is most effective. Occasionally, too much talking leads to pupils losing interest. Tasks are not always correctly tailored to pupils' different needs because the school lacks a system that closely and regularly tracks pupils' progress.

Throughout the school, the good quality of care means pupils feel safe and secure and this helps to promote high standards. The focus on developing pupils' self-esteem and their good knowledge of basic skills prepare pupils very well for the future. The curriculum is satisfactory with strengths in the richness of after school clubs and visits. Many opportunities for physical activity and the promotion of healthy lifestyles mean pupils are very aware of the importance of keeping fit.

The school provides good value for money. Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher already has a grasp of what is happening in school. The headteacher has introduced more collaboration and the recent audit means the school is clear about areas to develop. The headteacher is swift to respond to identified weaknesses. She has tackled the lack of resources, which is the underlying reason for the lack of improvement since the last inspection in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to help pupils learn in other subjects. In all other

areas, improvement has been good. Capacity to improve is good because staff are growing in confidence in ways to move the school forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enhance the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage to match more closely the way these children learn.
- Increase assessment procedures so that progress is more regularly checked and tracked as pupils move through the school.
- Improve resources for ICT and extend pupils' use of computers in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of pupils is good. Attainment as children start school varies, especially when year groups are not very large, but the overall standard is broadly typical for this age. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and the great majority reach the learning goals expected of children at the end of the Reception class. The practical approach to teaching letters and sounds means that many get off to a good start to their reading and writing.

The rate of progress is good throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The school's national assessment results for seven-year-olds show a rise in recent years and standards are above average. The most recent results show these standards have been further built upon, especially in writing, with more reaching above average standards. Results of national tests for 11 year olds show standards are also above average, although they dipped in 2006 because of the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is not complacent and is responding quickly to a slight dip in the number of pupils reaching above average in science. The school is emphasising the use of investigation in the teaching of science to check that pupils achieve as well as possible.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Some pupils overcome the barriers to their learning so well that they reach the level expected for their age and this represents very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Outstanding personal development and a real enthusiasm for learning are key reasons why pupils do well in school. They are very proud of their school, welcoming visitors in a polite and friendly manner. Laughter is often heard in school because pupils enjoy themselves. Above average attendance figures are testimony to how much pupils love their school. All activities are well supported and pupils take full advantage of the wide range of sporting activities. They are keen to keep physically fit and the school has been awarded a Healthy Schools award. They feel safe and secure because they know that adults will help them if they have a problem.

Pupils' spiritual development is excellent and prayer and reflection are regular features of daily life. Social and moral development are very good. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite and well mannered showing a real concern for the needs of others. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures is satisfactory but older pupils lack a real understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.

A particular strength is the pupils' feeling of ownership of their school, which makes the school a very close knit community. The school council and children's forum also make an effective contribution to this excellent ethos. Members are influential in making decisions and in giving the pupils a voice in school. They organise fund raising events and help other pupils to recognise their role in the community by supporting local charities. These opportunities combined with high literacy and numeracy skills prepare pupils very well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Central to the high standards is the good quality of teaching and learning. The strengths in teaching across all years are management and relationships. Pupils enjoy lessons because of the variety of activities and this increases their learning. Teachers prepare lessons with a well structured sequence of activities, which help lessons to run smoothly. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Teachers are not as effective in pointing out to pupils what they are to learn and then in checking that this has been achieved at the end of the lesson. In Year 6, teaching is very challenging and the pace is brisk. The teachers' quick-fire questioning keeps pupils on their toes and learning is effective. This quality of teaching is not consistent in other lessons and too much time spent talking to pupils means they lose interest in the task. The school assesses pupils at the end of every year to check on progress. However, a lack of more regular assessment means tasks are not always tailored to meet pupils' current needs to make sure they make the best progress they can. Teaching assistants provide good guidance but there are insufficient staff to ensure help is readily available. This is particularly so in the Foundation Stage where the teacher has some difficulty in providing more opportunities for learning through play and independent learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is well matched to pupils' ages and abilities. Careful planning means pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat or miss any aspects of the National Curriculum. Over the past few years the school has fallen behind with ICT resources and this means pupils are unable to develop ICT skills and to use these skills in other subjects. The children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a wide variety of practical activities, especially in the afternoon. However, literacy and numeracy sessions are too long and formal and these young children start to lose interest before the sessions finish. Regular

outdoor activities are planned for Foundation Stage children but the area set aside does not provide continuous access to the outdoor learning experiences that young children enjoy and need. The school is in the middle of a building programme to improve outdoor space for this age range. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to play a full part in school and they make good progress in their learning and in their personal achievements.

Pupils' personal development is catered for very well with discussion lessons and opportunities to learn about relationships and caring for others. This leads to contented and happy pupils who confidently take advantage of all that is on offer. A wide range of clubs outside lessons, visits and visitors greatly augment the richness of the curriculum. For example, older pupils learning about democracy extended their knowledge very well during a visit to the local Town Hall.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school gives high priority to pupils' welfare and safety. Safeguarding arrangements are in place. Child protection procedures are well established and the headteacher is organising additional training for new staff. Risk assessments before pupils go on visits are carried out thoroughly. Governors play a significant role in supporting the site supervisor with checks of the school premises. Swift action is taken to correct any problems. Good links are made with other agencies both to support staff and to guide pupils. For example, the school nurse and local health bus visit to encourage pupils to stay healthy.

The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory. Teachers are not yet making best use of information when planning lessons or spotting pupils who may need extra help to make sure they make the best progress possible. The school is starting to involve pupils more in their own learning by setting targets and telling them what they have to do to improve. As yet, this practice is not consistent in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a strong leader. In a short space of time, she has reviewed and adjusted the school's self-evaluation so that it is now up to date. With collaboration with staff, parents and governors the school now has a clear and accurate picture of what needs attention. Action has already been taken to improve resources for ICT and to improve facilities for outdoor play for the Foundation Stage. As a result of this, renewed enthusiasm for change and the good improvement since the last inspection the school has good capacity to improve.

Literacy and numeracy coordinators lead their subjects well. Discussions show they have closely analysed national test results and acted to resolve areas needing attention. This has effectively kept standards above average. The headteacher has taken over

the management of science and wasted no time in raising the profile of investigation to increase the number of pupils reaching above average standards.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and give close attention to monitoring spending and health and safety. They have not always been sufficiently involved in decision making, relying too much on the headteacher for information. For example, the spending on ICT has not been closely checked and this led to the school not keeping abreast of change in the subject.

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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?	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?	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	2
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?	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?	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	2
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

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

Crooklands Brow

Dalton-in-Furness

Cumbria

LA15 8JH

20 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I arrived at your school. I really appreciated your friendly greeting and the way you chatted to me during my visit. Your comments have been a great help in the writing of this report.

I agree that yours is a good school. You make a major contribution to this by your behaviour and the way you work hard. Your personal development is excellent and you really know how to keep safe and to help others. You told me you find the playground cramped, especially on a rainy day. I am sure when the building work is finished this will be better.

I have asked Mrs Rielly and the governors to look at ways to make your school even better. The children in the Reception class certainly enjoy themselves and teachers are finding even more ways to make their learning fun. Teachers are also looking at ways of checking that you are making as much progress as possible. More ICT resources are to be obtained so that you can have more opportunities to increase your skills.

By the time you receive this letter you will have had your half term holiday. I hope you all had a good time. I wish you well for the future.

Best wishes

Mrs J E Platt

Additional Inspector