



Ulverston Church of England Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112361
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289259
Inspection dates 15–16 February 2007
Reporting inspector Gordon Alston

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Church Walk
School category	Voluntary aided		Ulverston, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	4–7		LA12 7EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 894137
Number on roll (school)	85	Fax number	01229 894138
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Rhona Atkinson
		Headteacher	Miss Bernadette Calvey
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 15–16 February 2007	Inspection number 289259
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most and serves mainly White British pupils. There has been a decline in the birth rate locally reflected in a gradual fall in the number of pupils at the school. The area has little social or economic disadvantage and the number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. The school has gained an Active Mark award. The headteacher has been in post for just over one year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ulverston Infant school provides a good standard of education and good value for money. It considers its main responsibilities to be: 'To teach children how they should live and they will remember it all their lives'. It does this well for all pupils. Children learn to respect and understand their own feelings and those of others. Relationships in the school are good and pupils are polite, friendly and courteous. Their good behaviour and keen attitudes to work create a happy, productive and enjoyable learning environment. Parents are highly appreciative of everything the school does and overwhelmingly describe it as 'a good school'. One mum reflected on her child's years there as 'Great fun, care and fond memories'.

The headteacher, full of enthusiasm and vision, provides good leadership and has implemented fresh management procedures, ensuring that pupils achieve well and feel well cared for and protected. There are good systems for reviewing the work of the school. These underpin the positive record of improvement since her appointment. The school has an accurate view of its many strengths and this directs a well focused plan to enrich pupils' experiences and raise their achievement. This reflects the new rigour which is developing successfully through subject leaders' evaluation of their subjects.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned; they have good pace and an exciting rhythm of different activities, which result in motivated pupils. In Reception, standards are broadly average and children make good progress in some areas. Nevertheless, sometimes learning is only satisfactory because the dialogue between adults and children does not stimulate children's thinking or language enough. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress because discussions with adults and the tasks and activities presented to them pose challenge, encouraging them to think deeply. Consequently, pupils achieve well, particularly in communication and mathematical skills, and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average.

Pupils are beginning to know how to improve their work because of the better academic guidance. However, because group targets are not presented in child-friendly language, pupils often find it difficult to understand what they are trying to achieve. A good curriculum contributes well to pupils' understanding of how to live a healthy life, stay safe and make a constructive contribution to school life. Overall, pupils are being given a good grounding in the academic and personal skills needed for them to continue to flourish in their education and future lives.

The school has faced a decline in numbers for some time. Governors have worked valiantly to support the school through this. The school has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure learning is consistently good in the Reception year by improving the quality of conversations with, and questioning of, children.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to play a more active role in setting and reviewing their own targets to make them aware of how well they should achieve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, from when they start to when they leave the school, pupils achieve well. Inspection findings agree with test results and teacher assessments that attainment is average when children start school. Children make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Reception, most reach standards at the expected level for their age in all areas of learning. However, they do not find it easy to express their ideas clearly.

All pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and by the age of seven standards are above average in reading, writing and numeracy. Test results show an above average trend in pupils' performance over time. Teacher assessments have identified some differences in the performance of more able pupils, and of boys not doing as well as girls. Additional strategies are in place to address the needs of higher attaining boys and to challenge them more in their learning. Tracking systems for checking on pupils' progress have been introduced and extra support is given when needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show good understanding of how to take care of themselves. They exercise regularly, and eat and drink healthily. They know the importance of hygiene, where drugs should be stored safely and some talk knowledgeably about 'good and bad' foods. Pupils feel safe at school and know when to seek help from trusted adults. Attendance is above average, reflecting how much pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour is good. They take their responsibilities very seriously. The pupils make a positive contribution to school life; for example, writing commonsense solutions to problems on the 'Wall of Thoughts'. They organise charitable work and fundraising. Pupils develop the necessary skills well to secure their future economic well-being. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good grounding in social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning and life in their community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils show good levels of concentration and involvement in their lessons. This reflects good teaching, how well a brisk pace is maintained, the rhythmic flow of activity and pupils' active participation. For example, before programming a floor robot, two pupils planned a route to get their bee to a flower. Directions were discussed and the robot programmed. Then, pupils pressed the button to see if their instructions were correct. Throughout, the task challenged pupils and the teaching assistant intervened with thought-provoking questions. However, sometimes the learning of younger pupils is not as good as it could be because they are too quickly given the answers or the scope

of the questions is limited. For example, a teacher told the pupils about the properties of shapes rather than letting them identify them for themselves. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, supporting pupils well in small groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Despite limited outside accommodation, children in the Reception year benefit from sufficient opportunities provided inside and outside the classroom and a balance between adult-led activities and learning through exploration. Pupils throughout Years 1 and 2 speak enthusiastically about the sparkle brought to lessons. There is a good range of visits and visitors and opportunities to take part in clubs. Interesting links are made between subjects, for example combining the story of Moses with art and literacy. The pupils have good multicultural awareness because staff have provided a wide range of resources and experiences. Visits to the local 'Peace Cafe' and Methodist Church enrich their understanding and make much appreciated links with the community. The school is currently embarking on a nationally agreed scheme to further promote social and emotional aspects of learning to enhance the quality of the curriculum still further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

These are good; staff know pupils well and are fully committed to their welfare. The very caring learning environment helps eliminate bullying and the school works very closely with external agencies and parents. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements meet requirements. The school tracks learners' progress well through target-setting in English and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and carefully monitors their personal development. However, the use of this does not always provide individual pupils with enough guidance to help them understand the next steps they need to take in their learning. Well-planned induction procedures smooth children's start in Reception and good links with the junior school ease transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is in good hands. Under the enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher a thoughtful team is working very well together. There is a strong feeling of commitment and enthusiasm to further pupils' academic and personal achievement. Each member of the team is being professionally developed and supported to take on an important role.

The school's systems for keeping its work under review are good. Outcomes of assessment are analysed well to identify priorities for improvement. Work on reading and writing has resulted in improving standards. Currently, work is focused on helping

children in Reception achieve well and this is already reaping rewards. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The better assessment and tracking systems have supported pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to make good progress. The school improvement plan identifies relevant priorities and analyses success in terms of the effects of any actions on pupils' achievements. This is beginning to clarify the role each subject leader has to play in school self-evaluation. The leadership of literacy is strong and has a positive impact on the development of the subject.

The school is effective and wise decisions are being made to manage the resources and deploy staff to the best effect. The governing body is working hard to support the school during a period of falling rolls.

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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?	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	2

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?	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?	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	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

Ulverston CofE Infant School

Church Walk

Ulverston

Cumbria

LA12 7EN

19 February 2007

Dear Children

After spending two days in your school, I want to thank you all so much for making the experience a very enjoyable one. I came to see how well your school is performing and you had a very important role in this, just as your teachers had. You did not let the school down in any way. In fact your good behaviour and relationships are a credit to you all and helped me to judge just how well you and your school are doing.

I hope my report will help your teachers feel all their hard work is worthwhile. I always ask children for their views of the school and one boy said, 'Ulverston Infants is great – it's like one big happy family'. He was right; your school is a very caring place. You have a very committed headteacher who leads your school very successfully and has your well-being at the centre of all she does. She and all the staff make learning very interesting and also make you work hard. As a result, you are learning lots in lessons. They try to make school enjoyable and exciting with the many visits you go on and lots of visitors. I was pleased to see how hard you work, but equally important is how well you all get on. I saw several pupils who have responsibilities and do them very well. I was also very pleased to see all the clubs you have. You take regular exercise, and sport is important to you.

I'm sure your teachers always say, 'this is good but you could make it even better if you...'. Well, this is what I am telling your school. I know a number of changes have been taking place in the Reception class which are providing better opportunities for the children to learn. I think this could improve further if all adults try to get children to think really hard through the discussions they have with them. Also, I know you like the idea of having targets to work towards and to achieve. So, I would like your teachers to give you all clear individual targets so that you know how you can improve and I want all your teachers to really push you and challenge you in all lessons.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for giving me such a friendly welcome. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Alston

Lead Inspector