



Cartmel Priory CofE School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112437
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289288
Inspection date 13 February 2007
Reporting inspector Brian Blake HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Headless Cross
School category	Voluntary aided		Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands Cumbria, LA11 7SA
Age range of pupils	11–16	Telephone number	01539 536202
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	01539 536287
Number on roll (school)	413	Chair	Mr Jim Bloomer
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr Clive Peaple
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–16	13 February 2007	289288

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Carmel Priory Church of England School, which has specialist status for technology, is much smaller than the average sized secondary school. The area that the school serves is positive in terms of its socio-economic standing. Almost all of its students are of White British heritage, with significantly lower than average numbers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals. The school's attendance rate is better than average, as is its stability of population.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cartmel Priory Church of England School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school's specialist status has led to improvements in resources and accommodation but has had little impact on standards.

Although students start and finish at the school with above average standards, their rate of progress should better reflect the higher than average abilities of the majority of students. In 2005, the overall progress of students leaving the school was inadequate. In 2006, progress increased in English, significantly so in science, so that many more students were making satisfactory progress. In mathematics, however, overall progress declined, as it had done in the previous year. Senior managers, including the governors, are aware of these problems, but have only recently started to implement actions to address these issues. There are some encouraging signs that recent new appointments are helping the school to move forward, but much still needs to be done to overcome a lack of coherence and consistency of practice at all levels of management in the school. In particular, monitoring and evaluation of practice is inconsistent across the school and planning has not made explicit the links between proposed actions and the impact that they have on students' standards and progress.

Teachers care about the students. Lessons are satisfactory, although some are of a good standard. Parents appreciate that the school cares for and supports their children. Although there are adequate procedures to set individual learning targets for all students, there are too many inconsistencies in the quality of planning and evaluation of departmental work, and too little monitoring of students' progress.

The school has a strong Christian ethos, which supports satisfactorily the personal development and well-being of its students. Most students say they feel safe because the school is situated within a tight-knit community where everyone is well known. Although this makes for a stable and happy school, staff are aware that they need to raise students' awareness of the different lifestyles and ethnicity groups within contemporary British society. Students enjoy attending school and taking part in a range of extra-curricular activities. They enjoy their lessons, although the school recognises that it needs to offer a broader curriculum that more closely matches the needs and aspirations of all students, and also makes better use of post-16 and work-based opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress for all students, especially in mathematics.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work as an aid to raising standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students' standards are good, and their achievement satisfactory. The majority of students start at the school with standards that are above average. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 2006, standards were above average in all three core subjects, with more than the expected numbers of students achieving the higher levels in mathematics and science. At Key Stage 4, students achieved above average for five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. The average point score per student was also above the national average. These overall results show an improvement on the previous year.

Students' progress is satisfactory. The latest data presented by the school for 2006 show that progress has increased from the previous year in English, and significantly so in science. In mathematics, however, progress has declined, as it had done in the previous year.

Personal Development and well-being Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory, and is well-supported by the school's strong Christian ethos. Although spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory, the school acknowledges the need to raise awareness of different lifestyles and ethnicities of contemporary British society.

When necessary, students see the school nurse and get advice on medical and health issues. Most students say they feel safe because the school serves a tight-knit community where everyone is well-known. Younger students particularly appreciate having older student mentors, to whom they make take any concerns. Opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, especially sports and arts, contribute well to students' all-round health and general well-being. Students say they enjoy school, and this is reflected in the good rate of attendance, their punctuality in getting to lessons on time, and their good standard of behaviour around the school.

The school council is instrumental in bringing about change with innovative ideas on how to use the play areas at break and lunchtime, and what constitutes a comfortable summer uniform. Members of this group are confident and assured young people who take their roles seriously. These qualities of taking responsibility have been extended to the oldest students evaluating their annual reports. A good programme of work related learning prepares the oldest students to make confident choices about their future employment and/or other post-16 destinations.

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Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers know their students well. Lessons are planned satisfactorily and organised appropriately to ensure that the students stay on task in lessons and make progress against shared learning objectives. In the best lessons, teachers effectively use different techniques to maintain students' interest and motivation, which helps to sustain good levels of concentration. However, not all lessons achieve these outcomes consistently and, on occasions, work is insufficiently matched to the ability of students, causing some to work at a lower level than they should.

Teachers use praise and encouragement effectively, helping to motivate students and develop good working relationships within the classroom. Satisfactory use is made of an increasing amount of student performance data to set challenging targets and check students' progress, although this is inconsistently applied across the school. This is helping students to be clear about the levels that teachers have set for them across the curriculum. However, some students are unsure about what to do to achieve these targets in the short or longer term. The assessment of those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. A traditional academic curriculum is supplemented by a limited number of vocational courses to reflect the needs of the local economy, including leisure and tourism, and catering. The use of college placements is also limited. The school recognises these limitations and plans are in

preparation to offer students clearer curriculum pathways, much more closely matched to their needs and aspirations and making better use of post-16 and work-based placements. The school's specialist technology status has had little impact on the wider curriculum other than in the provision of improved information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, which are not used to maximum effect in all subject areas. The school has also recognised the need to review its current provision for citizenship to ensure all requirements are met, and to develop a more coherent programme of enrichment activities for gifted and talented students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care and support for its students, which is appreciated by parents. The ethos in the school is calm and purposeful, helping the youngest students to settle quickly into the school's routines. There are adequate systems to set individual learning targets and to give the students guidance on what they need to do to improve further. However, the monitoring of student progress across the full range of subjects is too inconsistent. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and understood by staff. Rigorous risk assessment for all activities, both on and off the school premises, demonstrates a strong commitment to students' safety. Even though a little bullying occurs, students say they are supported well by a trusting relationship with older students and at least one adult in the school. Vulnerable students, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported by staff and make satisfactory progress. Good links with primary schools and local post-16 providers ensure that students are sensitively supported through each stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although there have been some recent developments in leadership and management, the overall pace of change since the previous inspection has been too slow because self-evaluation has not always been sufficiently analytical and evaluative to identify areas for improvement. Planning has not consistently made explicit the links between proposed actions and their impact on outcomes. The school is well aware of the need to raise standards further at Key Stage 4 as an aid to improving the overall pace of students' progress, and a strengthened and restructured senior team, is beginning to put in place a clear strategic framework to bring these necessary changes. Specialist status has led to improvements in resources and accommodation but has had little impact on standards.

Middle managers are committed to the school's improvement agenda, but are not held sufficiently to account for their performance in implementing whole school policies and initiatives. Nor are they supported by robust systems to monitor and evaluate their impact on standards. Subject leaders recognise the need to evaluate the work of their department and understand their responsibilities for monitoring students'

progress, including those who are at risk of underachieving. As a result of this, departmental planning and evaluation are improving but remain too inconsistent across the school.

Governors are well informed and supportive but have, at times, been slow to identify and deal decisively with areas of underperformance. The governing body is working effectively to eliminate the school's deficit budget, which is helping the school to achieve satisfactory value for money.

Despite these weaknesses in leadership and management, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

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?	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	3
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

Cartmel Priory CofE School

Headless Cross

Cartmel

Grange-over-Sands

Cumbria

LA11 7SA

15 February 2007

Dear Students

You will know that I recently visited Cartmel Priory with two colleagues to inspect how well the school is helping you to achieve the best that you can in your education. Although we were only in school for one day we enjoyed meeting and talking with a number of you, and observing how do are doing in your lessons. I should like to thank you all for the help that you gave inspectors and, in particular, your willingness to talk about being a student at the school. I should also like to thank those parents who returned the inspection questionnaire, many of whom raised very important points that inspectors considered very carefully during the inspection.

You have a satisfactory school, where the majority of you already achieve high standards. However, given that many of you start at the school with above average standards, we would expect you to make better progress than currently happens in the school. This means that many more of you should be achieving even higher standards by the time you leave school at the end of Year 11.

We feel that although there has been some recent improvement in leadership and management, it has developed too slowly since the previous inspection of the school. As a result of this, we are asking the school to improve its monitoring and evaluation of all that it does, as an aid to improving the rate of progress that you make while attending the school. We want the school to pay particular attention to mathematics because, until the start of this school year, lack of progress in this subject has been most obvious.

Teachers are working hard to provide you with many different opportunities to enjoy your life in school. Most of the lessons that we saw were satisfactory, and some were good. In the best lessons, your teachers use a range of different activities to interest and motivate you, and to ensure that you are making progress with your learning. Not all lessons do this, and in some the level of work given is not sufficiently challenging for everyone in the class.

You told inspectors that you feel safe in school because 'everyone knows each other'. We felt that because of this you are able to form trusting relationships with teachers and other students, which means that your behaviour is generally good.

You have lots of opportunities to participate in school activities, and the range of subjects that you study is helping you to enjoy what you do, although this could be extended further to make even better provision for all of you.

The headteacher and staff want you all to do well, and they are aware of what needs to be done to help you achieve to the best of your ability. You have an important part to play in this also, by always working hard to do the best that you can.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector