

Cockerham Parochial Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119525
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291448
Inspection date	22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	72
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Bottomley
Headteacher	Mr Frank Green
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001
School address	Main Street Cockerham Lancaster Lancashire LA2 0EF
Telephone number	01524 791550
Fax number	01524 791550

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school serving a rural area on the outskirts of Lancaster. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below the national average, as is the number identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils are taught in mixed age classes and attainment on entry is broadly average. At the time of the inspection, a major building project was well underway.

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 that is friendly and caring and provides pupils with a good standard of education. Most parents are very supportive of the school and one parental comment captures the views of many, 'My overall opinion is that my children could not receive a better standard of education.'

Pupils achieve well with clear evidence of outstanding progress in Years 3 to 6. Most children start school with levels of attainment typical for their age but with the small number of pupils in each age group there is some fluctuation in overall entry levels. They make satisfactory progress in Reception and reach the expected levels across all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. This satisfactory progress is maintained in Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils leave Year 2 with standards that are average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in mathematics and writing some potentially high attainers do not achieve well enough. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, at the expected levels and at the higher levels. The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. A particular strength of the school is pupils' good information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Pastoral support is strong, with all staff firmly committed to pupils' care and well-being. Pupils respond well and, as a result, their personal development is good. Pupils are well behaved, considerate to others and enjoy coming to school. As one pupil said, 'what I like about this school is that everyone cares for each other.' Pupils are confident in talking about their achievements and willing to listen to the ideas and opinions of others. However, their knowledge of cultures other than their own is limited. Pupils are very aware of the importance of regular exercise and of eating healthily. They care for the environment and this is reflected in a letter sent recently by one pupil to the local authority requesting better facilities for recycling of materials. Attendance levels are above average.

Teaching and learning are good, with good relationships leading to a friendly working atmosphere in classrooms, despite the disruption caused by the on-going building work with one class having to work in the school hall. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. The good curriculum is enriched by out of school clubs and visits to places of interest. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their good writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. The lack of a designated outdoor area for children in the Reception class places restrictions on the range of opportunities the school can offer to its youngest pupils. The school has developed good systems to check on individual pupils' progress and older pupils in particular are very aware of what they need to do to improve on previous learning.

Leadership and management are good, with the school having an accurate self-evaluation. The school has a good capacity to make any necessary further improvements and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure potentially high attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve as well as they can in mathematics and writing.
- Provide more challenging opportunities for pupils to use their good writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

- Take all possible steps to ensure that children in the Reception age group have a well organised and equipped outdoor area.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well by the time they leave, with rapid progress in Years 3 to 6 resulting in above average standards. Pupils of all attainment levels achieve very well in Key Stage 2. The school's test results show that pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 has been outstandingly high for the previous three years and, in 2006, was in the top percentile. The school has compelling evidence to show that pupils are continuing to make very good progress in Key Stage 2, with results this year again expected to be high in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and not as rapid as in Key Stage 2. Assessments at the end of Reception, from an average starting point, show standards to be broadly average. Test results at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly average for the previous few years, but there is a pattern of below average numbers of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment in mathematics and writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All pupils respond well to the school's good provision for their personal development. They behave well and are eager to take on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council, which gives all of them a voice in how the school develops. Pupils enjoy school; this is reflected in above average attendance. They have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of the need to take regular exercise. Pupils also know how to stay safe; for example, by acting responsibly when playing in the playground and moving around the school. They are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education and future life because they not only have good basic skills but also good skills in the use of ICT. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. However, pupils do not have a good awareness of cultures different from their own. Pupils are courteous and respectful to others and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. From the Reception year onwards, they share resources fairly and collaborate well. They are aware of the need to think of others less well off than themselves and organise their own fundraising events for charitable causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of the teaching and learning is underpinned by high quality relationships between pupils and all members of staff. As a result, all pupils are keen to learn. Teaching typically includes well managed classrooms and good use of questioning. The quality of teaching and learning is very strong in Years 5 and 6. For example, in this class pupils thrive on being asked to solve mentally challenging numerical problems and they are proud to talk about their well planned project work on marketing a product. However, teachers in the mixed age group class for the younger pupils do not always plan challenging work within the age groups that is matched to pupils' needs. As a result, potential higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress in mathematics and writing. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support learning, especially for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is designed successfully to provide an appropriate balance between academic and creative activities. Outstanding opportunities are provided for pupils to use their ICT skills. The school provides a good programme for promoting pupils' personal development. A good emphasis is placed on the provision for the teaching of basic skills. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their good writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum. Curriculum planning has been refined in the class containing Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils to ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum. However, the lack of an outside area places restrictions on the range of activities younger pupils experience. The curriculum is extended effectively through a broad range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and links with others, such as the use of the swimming baths at the university.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good procedures are in place to protect and safeguard the pupils, and staff show a high level of concern for their welfare. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and they are confident that staff will listen to them if they have a problem. Good support in class for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities results in similar progress to their peers. Parents are very appreciative of the way their children are cared for while in school. Effective risk assessments are firmly in place in and around the school, and for off site visits. This important aspect of school life was very evident during the inspection with regard to the school's response to the building work taking place. The school has good procedures for checking pupils' academic progress but the information is not always used well enough in planning challenging work for younger pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher works hard and successfully to ensure that pupils receive a good standard of education. As such, pupils are supported well and standards by the time pupils leave are above average. A major strength of the school is the way in which all pupils feel valued and are included in everything the school offers. In this small school, teachers are all involved effectively in its leadership and management. Governance is of a good quality with the chairman having a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. Parents and pupils are consulted on a regular basis. The whole process of school self-evaluation has resulted in an overview of the work of the school which was confirmed as accurate by the inspection. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good overall.

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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?	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.

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	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

Cockerham Parochial Church of England Primary School

Main Street

Cockerham

Lancaster

Lancashire

LA2 0EF

25 March 2007

Dear Children

As you are aware I recently visited your school. I am writing to thank you for the super welcome you gave me and to let you know what I found.

You will be pleased to know that I think you go to a good school. I think it is good because all the grown ups teach you and look after you well. As a result, you make good progress in your work although I would like to see you use your good writing skills more in history and geography topics. You behave well, try hard, know how to make healthy and safe choices and look after each other. It is good to hear that you feel you have someone who will listen to you if you become upset.

So how are you and all the staff going to make your school even better? Well, despite the building work going on at the moment the children who are in their first year in school do not have an outside area where they can extend their learning. I also think that in Years 1 and 2 some of the work that pupils are asked to do in mathematics and writing could be a bit more challenging. I know you are proud to belong to Cockerham School and I know all of you will work together to make it even better.

My very best wishes to you all; I hope those of you going on the residential visit really enjoy it.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates

Lead Inspector