

Pennine Way Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131177
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	301729
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Johnston
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Blair
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2003
School address	Silverdale Road Harraby Carlisle Cumbria CA1 3RQ
Telephone number	01228 607518
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves a community where there are above average levels of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is above the national average, as is that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are White British. The headteacher has been in post since April 2005. In October 2005 the school experienced severe flooding with part of the school closed for five months. The school has been in receipt of extensive support from the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement and standards reached by pupils.

Over a considerable period of time, pupils leaving Pennine Way at the end of Year 6 have not been achieving as well as they could and standards have been well below the national average. With intensive support from the local authority, this is now improving. The headteacher has introduced several key changes to tackle the identified weaknesses. This includes the implementation of effective systems for self-evaluation and the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. Much improvement has been made in the Foundation Stage, where teaching is good and children make good progress. In Key Stage 2 pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in most areas of their learning. Nevertheless, despite these recent improvements, standards remain low at both key stages, with the legacy of underachievement continuing for pupils in Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. There are examples of good teaching in upper Key Stage 2 and of lessons of a satisfactory quality elsewhere. Although expectations about pupils' behaviour in lessons are high, those for their academic performance are often low. This results in a lack of challenge that continues to adversely affect pupils' progress. This is particularly the case in Years 1 and 2 and in writing. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants often results in good support for those pupils who have difficulty with their learning and this contributes to the satisfactory progress which these pupils make.

The curriculum satisfactorily meets pupils' needs. The focus on promoting personal development has met with a great deal of success. Behaviour is good. Pupils say they have no fear of bullying and that they really enjoy the range of activities in lessons and after school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are very supportive of one another and keen to do all they can to contribute to their school community. Attendance remains below average but is, overall, within the broadly average range. However despite recent overall improvement in attendance, unauthorised absence remains too high at four times the national figure. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to practise their basic skills across many areas of their learning and this hinders the preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall.

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory. The school provides a good level of care, and effective links with outside agencies contribute successfully to pupils' well-being. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, although the teachers' knowledge of pupils' academic standards is not used well enough to challenge pupils to improve further.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Parents and staff have well placed confidence in the strong leadership and clear sense of direction provided by the headteacher, and pupil numbers are rising. Weaknesses are understood and measures are being taken to eradicate them. Although standards have fallen since the last inspection, the school is determined to improve and has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to do so.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and is a strength of the school. The good start that children make in the Foundation Unit gives them a very firm basis for their future education. Children are provided with a variety of stimulating and purposeful activities which help them to make good progress from their low starting points on entry to the Nursery. Good teaching ensures activities are linked together skilfully, with the right mixture of adult-led and child-chosen experiences. Children's individual needs are carefully catered for and, as a result, they achieve well. The Foundation Unit is led well: good assessment procedures are in place and staff work together effectively as a team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress.
- Raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in writing across the school.
- Improve teaching and learning, and particularly the level of challenge in lessons.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate and standards are low when set against the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is low compared with that which is typical for their age, particularly in their communication skills. They make good, and at times outstanding, progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 most have reached or exceeded the goals set for their learning.

In Key Stage 1, pupils do not make the progress which they should, particularly in writing. In the 2006 assessments for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics, the school's results were markedly below national averages. School information shows that, despite some improvement, the results of the 2007 assessments are below those expected of pupils at the end of Year 2.

In 2006, following several years of decline, the results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 improved. Despite this improvement, the results remained exceptionally low when compared to the national average and pupils continued to underachieve. Early indications are that this improvement continued in 2007, with pupils making good progress in Year 6 in reading and mathematics to reach broadly average standards, although progress in writing remained slow. The school met its targets set for 2006 and 2007. Most pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are making satisfactory progress but this is not always rapid enough to make up the ground previously lost.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of themselves and the needs of others. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and that teachers will quickly resolve any issues. Friendly welcomes and cheerful smiles are characteristic of the school. Pupils enjoy lessons and talk eagerly about the interesting

activities they are expected to complete. Attendance, despite a recent marginal improvement to within the broadly average range, remains below average. The school is taking steps to dissuade parents from taking holidays during term time but unauthorised absence is still too high. Pupils readily discuss the school council's contribution to the life and work of the school. They are keen to take responsibility, for example, when helping to serve at the healthy salad bar during lunchtime. A good understanding is shown of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through vigorous activity and through the Year 6 analysis of the packed lunches some pupils bring to school. While pupils are preparing well for the next stage of their education in their personal and social skills, a legacy of weak academic skills detracts from their prospects for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate overall. Although there are pockets of good teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2, teaching in Key Stage 1 does not foster the quality of learning of which pupils are capable. Elsewhere, in the best lessons the pace is brisk and demanding but these lessons are not frequent enough. Throughout the school good relationships are maintained between adults and pupils; this is a consistent strength. This ensures good behaviour, willingness and readiness among pupils to learn. Teachers plan interesting activities which pupils say they enjoy and at times these are challenging. However, some short-term planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment and too often expectations are not high enough. This is particularly the case in writing and is one of the reasons why standards are not high enough. The marking of work is generally informative and pupils' self-evaluations are helpful, but the use of day-to-day assessment has yet to make its full impact on improving the speed at which pupils learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and recent changes aimed at providing for the different needs and aspirations of pupils are having some success. For example, one afternoon per week is devoted to 'smart clubs' whereby the whole school is mixed and classes are run based on pupils' interests. This has motivated pupils, raised their self-esteem and provided well for the development of their social skills. Many other initiatives are still developmental. For example, plans to build on the success of the Foundation Stage by introducing a thematic approach to learning throughout the school and the use of different subjects as a vehicle to inspire pupils' writing are not yet fully implemented. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including basketball, gymnastics and a choir. These are popular and contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils have opportunities to participate in outside visits, including a residential stay. The school makes good use of external speakers, for example the police and fire services, to provide for pupils' safety and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory. Personal and social care are good. Parents show respect and appreciation of the care shown to their children. Training

for child protection has recently been updated and disseminated to all staff. Risk assessments are regular and effective. The school has a good partnership with parents, the educational welfare officer and other agencies to support pupils' needs. Learners at risk, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are quickly identified and their needs met. Although the school now has good information about the progress pupils make, this information is not yet used consistently well enough to guide pupils towards higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher's clear and determined leadership is sharply focused on raising standards. The changes introduced are correctly targeted on areas of weakness identified through effective data analysis and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. The weaknesses are now being addressed systematically. For example, the rate of exclusions has been greatly reduced and the Year 6 pupils in 2007 received considerable support to bring about significant improvements to their attainment in mathematics and science. However, the pace of improvement has not been fast enough to address fully the legacy of underachievement. Although a higher proportion of pupils are now making the progress that they should, much remains to be done. For example, although the headteacher is increasingly well supported by governors and the senior team, the leadership and management of Key Stage 1 have not been effective enough to tackle the underachievement there. Governors are supportive of the school and have worked hard to eliminate a deficit budget. They are aware that weaknesses remain in pupils' achievement and standards but their view of the rate of improvement is over-optimistic. The school does not provide value for money.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pennine Way Primary School, Cumbria, CA1 3RQ

Thank you for making the inspection team welcome during the days we spent with you recently. Although we found many good things, we think your school could do better in some important areas. We are pleased that you like school and that you enjoy your lessons. It is good that you are trying hard to eat healthily and enjoy exercise. Your teachers told us that your behaviour has improved – well done!

The headteacher and all the staff care for you well and are working hard to try to improve your school. However, at the moment quite a lot of you do not make as much progress as you should. So we have given your school a 'Notice to Improve'. Your writing, in particular, could be much better.

We have asked your school to make sure that all your lessons help you to make better progress by always challenging you to do you best. We have asked the school to ensure that more of you attend school more regularly.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy school and that you will help your headteacher, the staff and the school governors to improve your work further.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector