

# Oughterside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112138
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	310795
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathryn Dodd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Penny Gray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Nicholas Sutton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Aspatia Wigton Cumbria CA7 2PY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01697 320579
<b>Fax number</b>	01697 323640

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Almost all the pupils at this much smaller than average school are White British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has fallen by approximately one quarter, resulting in changes to how pupils are organised into classes; all are taught in mixed-aged classes. The school holds the Activemark award.

## 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, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure necessary improvements in the school.

Although pupils reach average standards by Year 6, they make inadequate progress from their varying starting points. In recent years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been declining. Leaders and managers do not ensure that the quality of education, including teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils, is of an acceptable standard. Many parents expressed their concerns either orally or through the inspection questionnaire. They think that their children's education has deteriorated and some say that they have lost confidence that things will improve. Nevertheless, pupils say that they enjoy school. Their behaviour is good and they demonstrate mature and sensible attitudes to learning. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to be healthy and safe. They enjoy making their school community a pleasant place to learn. Pupils particularly appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in activities beyond their classrooms.

Inadequate teaching and learning contribute significantly to pupils' slow progress. There is not enough good teaching to accelerate the pace of learning and eradicate underachievement. Further difficulties are created by staff absences and occasions when teachers leave classrooms to undertake other duties. Although teaching assistants make a valuable contribution at such times, this disruption interferes with the continuity of pupils' learning. The curriculum enables pupils to make good progress in their personal development but it is inadequate in most other respects because it does not take enough account of pupils' varying learning needs. Staff provide a satisfactory level of pastoral care. Relationships between adults and pupils are, for the most part, warm and caring. However, this provision is undermined because the school attaches insufficient priority to checking that policies to ensure that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment operate on a day-by-day basis.

There has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection and, as a result, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money. Pupils' underachievement across the school and the trend of declining standards at the end of Year 2 are not being addressed with sufficient urgency and rigour. Key to this is that leaders and managers remain unclear how to spot slow progress or to check the quality of provision across the school. Governors are not clear of all their statutory responsibilities and, in some areas, fail to meet them. At present, they are inadequately skilled at holding the school to account. These weaknesses have led the school to make an inaccurate evaluation of its own effectiveness. Although the headteacher has recently acknowledged that additional support is required if the school is to improve, the scale and number of improvements needed are extensive. The widespread dissatisfaction amongst parents highlights clearly the urgency with which weaknesses need to be tackled. This is beyond the school's current capacity.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 4

When children start in the Foundation Stage, their skills are broadly typical for their age. Very small numbers mean that these can, however, vary widely. Children make inadequate progress

because the provision, including teaching and learning and the curriculum, is inadequate. In 2007, for example, children entered school with reading skills in line with those found nationally but, by the time they entered Year 1, they were below what is expected. The falling number of pupils in the school has necessitated the inclusion of Reception children in the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Although staff attempt to provide tailored support, children are often removed from class and taught by teaching assistants. These staff provide very caring and sensitive support but the range of activities and resources on offer do not fire children's imaginations, or encourage them to become eager learners. Furthermore, children have limited opportunities for learning outdoors. Leadership and management are inadequate. Small steps in children's achievements are not assessed regularly or robustly enough. At present, insufficient use is made of any information collected in order to identify how the quality of provision might be improved to meet children's individual learning needs more fully.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate pupils' progress by improving the quality and continuity of teaching and learning.
- Take urgent steps to ensure that health and safety and child protection policies are fully up to date.
- Ensure that governors are aware of and fulfil all their statutory responsibilities and are suitably skilled to hold the school to account.
- Extend the skills of leaders and managers so that they can accurately monitor and evaluate the school's performance and the quality of education provided.
- Establish a good working relationship with parents.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 4**

The very small number of pupils in each year group means that standards can vary from year to year. However, it is clear that pupils do not make enough progress from their differing starting points. In 2007 the results of national tests for Year 6 pupils were average and standards currently are also average. Pupils' progress is inadequate because they do not make sufficient gains in their learning to build on the above average standards that they had attained when they started Year 3. However, over recent years, the standards reached by pupils in Year 2 have been declining steadily. School data and inspection evidence show that this trend is set to continue in 2008. Current standards in Year 2 are below average, particularly in writing. This reflects inadequate progress because the pupils entered Year 1 with skills similar to those found nationally.

An important contributory factor to underachievement across the school is the disruption caused by many changes of teacher. These changes result from staff absences and staff taking time out of lessons to undertake other duties. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not make the progress that they should because their additional needs are not always identified quickly enough or the right intervention strategies put into place.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, provide a positive starting point for improving their academic achievement. Pupils say that they enjoy school, particularly the range of enriching activities on offer. Attendance matches the national average. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons, around school and

in the playground. They are particularly polite and friendly and show a good awareness of the needs of others. Most pupils say that they feel safe and that there is no bullying. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school community. Older pupils show their growing maturity through helping with small duties around school. Pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles is seen in their enjoyment in taking part in a good range of sport and other physical activities, such as the daily 'wake up and shake up' sessions and sports day. Pupils know why it is sensible to eat healthily. They develop good social and personal skills, and these, along with the average standards reached in basic literacy and numeracy skills, prepare them soundly for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Although the sample of lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better, the quality of teaching and learning is inadequate overall because pupils do not make enough progress over time to achieve as well as they should. Lessons are orderly and teachers hold pupils' interest. Relationships are positive and, as a result, pupils enjoy their work and behave well. Usually, teachers give some consideration to the fact that they have more than one age group in each class. However, they do not always make effective use of their assessments of what pupils already know and can do to plan work that matches pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils are often given work lacking new challenges. Expectations of what pupils might be able to achieve are insufficiently high to enable them to make good progress or to make up for previous lost ground. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution. They willingly take responsibility for pupils' learning when teachers are not present. There is clear evidence in pupils' books that learning suffers because of too many changes of teacher. The presentation of pupils' work is often untidy with too much work that is unfinished. Marking often fails to help them to know how to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum is inadequate. It has some good features, mainly the good range of interesting activities that promote enjoyment and help pupils learn how to keep healthy. The curriculum, however, is not adapted well enough to the particular needs of the pupils or to the learning needs of children in the Foundation Stage. The more able pupils, for example, have too few opportunities to show what they are capable of. Similarly, opportunities to provide help for pupils when their learning needs that extra boost are sometimes overlooked. This is because staff sometimes fail to spot when pupils are falling behind. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology, for example as part of their work in other subjects of the curriculum; this is particularly the case for the younger pupils and those in the Foundation Stage.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 4**

Although care, guidance and support are inadequate overall, day-to-day pastoral care is satisfactory. Staff know their pupils well and this helps them to provide sensitive support when needed. Pupils often benefit from good quality support from teaching assistants and parents particularly appreciate this. Pupils are starting to discuss their learning targets with adults so

that they know how to improve. Many changes of teachers, however, result in inconsistencies in the quality of marking and targets that are insufficiently challenging. Although the school has developed systems to track pupils' achievement as they move through the school, teachers do not use this information well enough to spot when learning is too slow. As a result, underachievement sometimes goes unnoticed. Many parents express their dissatisfaction with procedures for safeguarding their children. The school has health and safety and child protection policies in place and is taking urgent action to ensure they are strengthened to meet fully all current requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher and staff work hard to ensure that the pupils enjoy school, develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Due to the class teaching commitment of the headteacher and the small number of staff, a 'collegiate' style of leadership has been adopted in an attempt to share the workload more equitably. At present however, staff do not have the skills they need to be able to evaluate performance information, particularly recognising when pupils' progress is too slow. This means that monitoring and evaluating does not pinpoint precisely where improvement is most needed. Also, responsibilities and accountabilities for doing so are insufficiently clear. Consequently, staff are unaware that pupils' achievement and teaching and learning are inadequate and they think that the school is better than it is. Although governors are kept informed and are supportive, they do not contribute effectively to self-evaluation or hold the school to account as well as they should. Furthermore, they are insufficiently clear of their statutory duties which, in part, they are failing to meet. Recently, the school has recognised that it needs help if it is to improve and staff now welcome the support of the local authority. Nevertheless, there remains much to do. There is, for example, an urgent need to gain the support of parents who at present express widespread dissatisfaction with the school.

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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?	4
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	4

### 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 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	3

### 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?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
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	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oughterside Primary School, Cumbria, CA7 2PY

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. You were polite, keen to talk to me and answered my questions thoughtfully. Your behaviour was good and it was pleasing to see just how kind and caring you are towards one another. This is helping you to feel safe in school. I particularly enjoyed joining in your daily 'wake up and shake up' session in assembly. It was pleasing to hear that you know that this helps you to get ready for your learning. I was impressed with how much you know about keeping your bodies healthy. You showed me how grown up you can be when doing your special jobs and helping to make your school a happy place to learn. You get lots of chances to take part in activities beyond lessons such as on trips and having visitors. It was good to see you take part so enthusiastically in sports day. You were right to feel proud of your achievements.

Although you told me that you enjoy school, many of your parents are unhappy with the education you receive. The standards that you reach by the time you go to secondary school at the end of Year 6 are similar to most schools. However, the rate at which you are learning is too slow. You are not all reaching the high standards in English, mathematics and science of which you are capable. Although the adults in the school know that there are many things that could be better, they need help to make the changes quickly. This is why your school is being placed in 'special measures'. Your school is going to receive extra help to make sure that: -

- your learning speeds up because all of your lessons are equally good;
- governors do all the things they should to check that your school is as good as it should be;
- staff know how to find out whether or not you are doing as well as you should;
- your parents are more satisfied with the quality of your education.

I feel sure that you will help your school as much as possible by continuing to try really hard, and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector