

Arlecdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112151
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310799
Inspection date	20 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Pat Kime HMI

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	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ged Toman
Headteacher	Mr Philip Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Arlecdon Road Arlecdon Frizington Cumbria CA26 3XA
Telephone number	01946 861409
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Introduction

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

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects of its work: pupils' achievement; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: observations of lessons, an assembly, and break time; discussions with staff and pupils; parents' and carers' replies to the inspection questionnaire; and examination of documentary evidence provided by the school.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. Nonetheless, in most aspects, the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified. Such assessments have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Arlecdon is a much smaller than average primary school. It serves a small, socially and economically mixed rural village community. It is located close to the west Cumbrian coast and the western fringe of the Lake District National Park. All the pupils are White British. The vast majority of them live in the village, though a few travel from neighbouring villages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low as is the proportion in receipt of free school meals. The five to eleven-year-olds are taught in three mixed age classes. There are also 10 children who attend the school's Nursery each morning. The Nursery caters for several villages so, in most years, some of the Nursery children join Reception in other schools.

An acting headteacher, appointed from the school's staff, took charge in September 2007 and a new teacher was appointed to take the Year 3 and 4 class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Arlecdon Primary is a good school. It provides good quality care and a good academic education in a calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school. They make good progress in their school work and very good progress in personal development. By the end of Year 6, academic standards are high. Parents think very well of the school. They particularly appreciate the extensive range of extra-curricular sports, the quality of care and the approachability of the staff, and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

When children start in the Nursery, their skills vary considerably between children and from year to year. Overall, the children can do what is typical for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) so that, by the end of the Reception year, most children are working at the level expected for their age and some have achieved more than this than this in some aspects of their learning.

The school's records and recent test results show that pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2). In 2007 standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1.

Pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 2. Since the previous inspection, standards each year have been above or well above average at the end of this key stage. This shows that the pupils have generally made much better than average progress in Key Stage 2. In 2007, standards in science were very high; they rose for the third successive year. Standards in mathematics were securely above average. In English, standards were above average overall but reading was markedly better than writing. The standard of the present Year 6's work indicates that the school's predictions for the national end of key stage tests this year are reasonably accurate and would represent very good achievement in Key Stage 2 for this year group. A few pupils are unlikely to reach an average standard but, in English, considerably more are expected to reach an above average standard for their age than did so in 2007.

Pupils' progress and the standards they reach show that the improvements seen at the previous inspection have been consolidated. Nevertheless, the acting headteacher and the governing body recognise that, with the recent changes to the staffing, they need to keep a close eye on pupils' progress term by term to ensure that high standards are maintained.

Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. They grow into mature and responsible youngsters who are well-equipped to make the most of education in the future and contribute to society. Through the 'suggestions box', class councillors and the school council, all pupils contribute to the life of the school as a community and they know from experience that staff and governors will listen to the pupils' voice and act on their suggestions. Pupils also make a good contribution to the local community. The school emphasises the importance of physical exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle and is successful in motivating pupils to be active. Staff provide a wide range of after-school sports clubs and celebrate pupils' participation and success in competitions. Many pupils, both boys and girls, enjoy these clubs and they appreciate the fact that staff give of their free time to provide them. Pupils are also active at break times, making good use of the play equipment that was requested by the school council. Pupils develop a very good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet and are very well informed about the effects on the body of excessive intakes of sugar, fats and salt. Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident from their consistently above average attendance and the fact they can think of very little about the school that could be improved.

Teaching is good overall and it is particularly effective in Nursery and Years 5 and 6. Staff manage their classes well and have excellent relationships with the pupils. They usually plan lessons with different activities for each year group. The lessons seen by the inspector and the work in pupils' exercise books, show that the more effective teaching is characterised by:

- higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
- better match of work to the capabilities of the older pupils in the class
- a brisker pace of work with activities well suited to the learning objectives
- marking that helps pupils know how to do better.

The school provides a good curriculum that meets national requirements and is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. In addition to the numerous after-school sports clubs, staff and parents provide a fell walking club and take pupils camping and all pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to try challenging activities at a local outdoor centre. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across subjects is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was raised as a key issue. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to develop and use their literacy and numeracy skills across subjects but such work is not yet systematically planned through the school. The good quality specialist provision for music, noted in the previous inspection, report has been maintained. The teachers take responsibility for leading the school's work in different subjects but this role is underdeveloped. As a result, some subjects have not been reviewed for some time.

Pastoral care is of a very good quality and the school works in a good partnership with parents and external agencies to meet pupils' needs. Staff know the pupils well as individuals. Pupils feel safe. They know the staff take good care of them. They say that everyone gets on really well and, if there are any squabbles, the staff help to sort them out quickly. The guidance and support offered to pupils to enable them to do as well as they can are satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is assessed regularly. They have targets for their work in English and mathematics but there is not a consistent approach to setting these. For some pupils targets are updated rather infrequently and many pupils are not certain what theirs are. The school has recently introduced a new system to track progress on a termly basis but it has yet to establish robust links between assessment and pupils' targets.

The acting headteacher and the governing body have a generally accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. They know which areas of its work are priorities for improvement and they have plans to tackle these. However, because the analysis of pupils' performance and the effectiveness of the school's provision lacks depth and rigour, these plans are not sufficiently sharply focused on what exactly needs to be done and how improvement will be measured. This is seen in the school's improvement plan and in its literacy action plan to tackle the relative weakness in writing. The recognition of areas for development, along with enthusiasm and commitment of staff, the support of the well-organised governing body, and the schools' receptivity to advice, give it satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. They learn particularly rapidly in Nursery, where they benefit from a very wide range of activities that promote all areas of learning in and out of doors and a generous number of skilled staff. By the end of the Reception year, most children meet the learning goals for children of their age and some exceed these goals in aspects of their learning. Standards in early reading, writing and mathematics are at least satisfactory,

though some children are making slower progress in reading than in mathematics. Children generally make best progress in personal, social and emotional development. They learn to co-operate, share and take turns and to work and play with a good degree of independence. They gain the confidence to try new activities.

The Reception children are taught in a class with the Key Stage 1 pupils. The curriculum provided for them covers all the required areas of learning effectively and allows sufficient opportunities for learning through play. Support staff are used well to meet these young children's particular needs within the classroom. Effective teamwork between Nursery and Reception staff ensures that there are good arrangements to support children's transition from Nursery to Reception. Pupils in each of these year groups have opportunities to join activities in both classes. This crossover is managed well and staff keep track of each child's activities and learning. The more able children in Reception benefit from opportunities to tackle more demanding work with Year 1 pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Strengthen leadership and management, in particular
- the way information from regular assessment of pupils' learning is used to influence planning for improvement
- the sharpness of focus of planning for improvement
- the role of the teachers as subject leaders.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
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?	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	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	2
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	2
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	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

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arlecdon Primary School, Cumbria, CA26 3XA

You may remember that I visited your school recently. I came to see how well you are all learning. I enjoyed my day at your happy, friendly school. Thank you for making me feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to me about your work and what it is like to be a pupil at your school. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

You, your parents and Mr Harrison all told me that Arlecdon is a good school and you are right, it is. You are taught well and you make really good progress. On the whole, you do best at science, mathematics and reading but your writing is not quite as good.

The adults take very good care of you. They help you to grow up well, to learn how to keep healthy and safe, and to be responsible and care for other people. You know a lot about healthy eating and why some foods are not very good for you. I was impressed by the number of sports clubs you have and the other extra activities like the fell walking, and camping, and the outdoor activities at Gillerthawaite.

Mr Harrison, and the staff, and the school's governors all want to make your school even better. I have suggested that they focus particularly on three things:

- helping you to do better at writing
- the way they keep track of exactly how well each one of you is doing
- how they decide what to do to improve the school and make sure you do really well in all the subjects.

For you, the most important things are to carry on working hard, making your contribution to school life and growing into caring and responsible young people. I'm sure you will have some good ideas that will help improve your school further and you will be able to suggest them through the school council.

You all have my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector