

# South Walney Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112211
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	310814
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Dave Byrne

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Les Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Cunningham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Amphitrite Street South Walney Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 3EG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 471447
<b>Fax number</b>	01229 471447

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small school. All pupils are of White British origin. An above average percentage has learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the percentage eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school population is relatively stable with few pupils leaving or joining at times other than the normal start or end of the academic year.

## 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 in which pupils enjoy their learning immensely. Parents are correct in their belief that the school is doing a good job. Excellent relationships exist between everyone in the school and a calm and secure environment promotes good learning. Pupils achieve well in terms of their academic and personal development. Standards have risen in recent years and pupils make good progress. In 2007, standards were above average in English, mathematics and science and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved very well compared to similar pupils nationally.

Pupils are generally mature and confident; this, together with their above average academic skills, prepares them well for secondary schooling. They usually behave well and have a good sense of moral and social issues. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural richness and diversity of modern Britain, however, is relatively weak. They are enthusiastic about healthy living and welcome opportunities to contribute to school life, for instance through acting as prefects or school councillors or participating as Eco Warriors. Imaginative tasks such as creating a digital film based on Beowulf, visiting Forum 28 to see plays such as *Witches Bogey* and opportunities to work with a resident musician significantly enrich what is a good curriculum. Pupils say they feel safe in school because the staff look after them. A typical comment was, 'I like the teachers because they cheer you up when you're feeling down'. Indeed, pupils' safety is paramount throughout the school.

Teaching and learning have many strengths. Although there are some differences in the quality of teaching, all teachers are committed to doing the best for their pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is particularly strong, most noticeably in Year 6 where it is excellent. In some classes, however, the pace of lessons slows and pupils listen too much rather than develop their thoughts and ideas through debate and discussion. The purpose of every lesson is explained to pupils and this gives them a clear purpose. This is followed up by checks at the end to find what has been learnt. Assessment is frequent, thorough and manageable. It is useful in identifying pupils who have not learnt things well enough, so that timely intervention can be given to sort things out. In doing so, teaching assistants play an invaluable role.

The headteacher provides strong and caring leadership. Close and productive links have been built with the local community and nearby schools. The senior leadership team manage the school very well, supported by a good governing body and an excellent school business manager. There is a secure grasp of where the school's strengths lie and the developments needed. Since the last inspection the school has improved significantly and has a good capacity to improve in future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for pupils in all classes to debate and discuss their ideas.
- Strengthen the curriculum so that pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the cultural richness and diversity of modern Britain.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

When pupils start school standards are broadly average. They make good progress as they move through the school, accelerating noticeably in Year 6. Standards rise to above average in English,

mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement from the point of entry. The above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are higher than at the last inspection. In 2007, the percentage gaining the nationally expected standard of Level 4 was significantly above the national average, with an average percentage reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do very well; they make very good progress and reach standards that are higher than similar pupils nationally. Although boys did better than girls in 2007, this is not a pattern and the school has successfully removed the gap in performance between genders in recent years. School data, supported by inspection findings, show that standards are likely to be slightly better in 2008 with an increase in the percentage gaining the higher Level 5.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak enthusiastically about other activities, such as the musical productions. By Year 6 they have very positive attitudes to learning. A typical comment was, 'I like lessons because you get to do lots of different things, and they're fun'. Pupils usually contribute to lessons enthusiastically, work hard and behave well. Only very occasionally is a lesson disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Around the school, pupils are friendly and polite. Relationships are outstanding, with everyone in the school getting on well together. For example, Year 6 pupils value their role as buddies to those in Year 3. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good although cultural development is the weakest aspect. Pupils' knowledge of the cultural diversity of modern Britain is relatively weak. The pupils have a good grasp of the choices they need to make to stay safe, fit and healthy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, as prefects, Eco Warriors or as members of the school council. Good levels of basic skills and opportunities to nurture other talents through activities such as enterprise workshops at the local secondary school prepare pupils well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with some exemplary features. Assessment is used well to plan work that matches pupils' abilities. Teachers and pupils all get on well together. Classrooms are vibrant and lively with some high quality displays. Teachers work very well with a skilled teaching assistant team to give all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, good quality support. Every lesson has a clear purpose which is shared with pupils and helps them to understand how well they are doing. Good marking by teachers offers pupils appropriate guidance on how they might improve. When teaching is at its very best lessons move along quickly, resources such as information and communication technology are used imaginatively and pupils enter into debates and discussions. Strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, especially in Year 6 where teaching is excellent, result in pupils doing well in reading, writing and mathematics. During an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 6 the presentation of 'Swamp Goo' fired pupils' imaginations. This was very skilfully harnessed to get them to apply their basic skills to produce high quality writing about Shrek's personal hygiene! The quality of teaching varies slightly between classes and where teaching is only satisfactory there is too much talk by teachers which slows learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

A good range of activities and experiences, both in and outside lessons, meets the needs of all pupils. A strong curriculum for English, mathematics and science enables pupils to achieve well and raise standards. Where pupils are falling behind, the school has effective intervention programmes to help them catch up. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, resulting in them making very good progress. Over the past few years improvements to planning have successfully enriched the curriculum. Educational trips out of school and visiting specialists to events such as the Eco Week and the Healthy Eating Week are used to develop pupils' basic skills through work in all subjects. Computers are being used well to complement learning. The school's achievement of the Activemark underlines the good quality of sporting provision and the school is currently in the process of improving its provision for performing arts and music. A strong programme of personal and social education contributes to pupils' good levels of personal development. Many activities outside lessons enrich the curriculum and pupils speak enthusiastically about the choir, musical productions and a variety of clubs from gymnastics to touch typing.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good levels of pastoral care are founded on positive relationships between the staff, pupils and their families. As a result, it is often parents who approach school for support because they know they will receive sympathetic advice and guidance. The school's procedures for child protection are in place and arrangements to keep pupils safe follow national guidelines. Effective links with outside agencies provided by the education and health services ensure pupils have extra support when needed. The school is conscientious in assessing risks both at school and when pupils are out on activities. Assessment and academic guidance is also good. The use of targets in English and mathematics are most effective and older pupils in particular are well aware of how they can improve their work. The assessment of achievement in other subjects is developing well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher has the respect of everyone. She has the gift of listening to her staff and pupils, treating them as individuals and thereby getting the best out of them. Whilst the school welcomes new initiatives in education, it only implements what works for this school. The senior leadership team has a clear vision for developing the school and values the involvement of staff, pupils, parents, governors and the wider community in forward planning. Good procedures for monitoring the school result in an accurate self-evaluation linked to realistic goals for school improvement. Challenging targets are extremely well used to set goals for pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 2. The success in reaching these has contributed to a significant improvement in standards in recent years. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well managed and all subjects, but particularly English and mathematics, are effectively led.

Inspection report:South Walney Junior School, 9–10 April 20085 of 11Document reference number: HMI 250701 September 2007Inspection report:South Walney Junior School, 9–10 April 20084 of 11Document reference number: HMI 250701 September 2007Governors are supportive and make sure all statutory requirements are met. Finances are very well managed. An excellent business manager ensures that spending is rigorously monitored to get good 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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

11 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Walney Junior School, Cumbria, LA14 3EG

To share time with you in lessons, to have the chance to talk with you at playtimes and discuss important things such as the football teams you support are wonderful memories! Thank you for showing friendship and being so helpful during our visit and please thank your parents for sending me their views of the school.

Your school is good and has some excellent elements. One of the strengths is your behaviour and the way you like school. I know some of you get a bit restless at times, but even then you know how to control what you do and say. This makes the school a calm and happy place. Smiles seem to be the norm, even in demanding lessons where you have to rapidly come up with ideas to describe Shrek's hygiene! When you find work hard you try and try again, which is a great attitude to have. I was pleased that you feel safe in the school and enjoy attending it. The school does a great job in keeping you safe and caring for you all.

You have every right to be proud of reaching standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Those of you who find learning difficult do very well because of the very good support you receive. It is obvious that you know what to do to stay fit, healthy and safe and I was impressed by the way you talked with pride about the many jobs you do to help others in school. Your teachers work very hard to give you exciting and interesting lessons and also do even more by arranging a variety of visits and providing clubs.

Whilst teaching is good overall, the school will be finding ways of making sure that all of you are given more chance to discuss and debate during lessons so that you develop your own ideas and thoughts. You are very caring and kind to others, and know your local area well, including locating that famous chip shop on a map, but your knowledge of people from different backgrounds to yourselves could be better. The school will be broadening this area of your understanding.

Your school is so good because of the dedication and skill of your headteacher supported by the staff and governors and also your parents. You are lucky to attend a school that prepares you well for your future lives.

I send you all my best wishes and hope you continue to be polite and caring.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne

Lead Inspector