

Dane Ghyll School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112213
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310815
Inspection dates	20–21 September 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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Don Blackhurst
Headteacher	Mr Garry Schofield
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Skelwith Drive Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 4PG
Telephone number	01229 894655
Fax number	01229 894675

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is an average size primary school situated in a residential area in the outskirts of Barrow but not far from the Lake District National Park. The surrounding area is characterised by private property. The percentage of children eligible for a free school meal is below that in most schools. The school has a below average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are a small number of looked after pupils. While there is a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, none are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school has won awards for its achievements in previous years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges its overall effectiveness to be good and inspection findings agree. The warm and welcoming school ethos ensures this is a happy school where pupils achieve well. The good curriculum is enhanced by an outstanding range of clubs and activities outside normal lessons that contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. Parents are highly supportive of the school. One parent's view reflects the view of many, 'I am extremely pleased with the level and progress my child has made.' Pupils consistently attain above average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, they have insufficient opportunity to use key skills such as writing in other subjects.

By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy school, they say they feel safe and valued. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language take a full part in school life. Caring staff ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after pupils are fully included in school life. Pupils' outstanding personal development contributes to outstanding behaviour, a real willingness to learn and the development of very good friendships between pupils. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school's community and there are many links with outside organisations. Their acquisition of the skills that they will need for their future economic well-being in later life is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep healthy and fit.

Teaching and learning are good with very good support from teaching assistants. The school has recently put in place a system across the school to track pupils' progress. The information gathered is not used well enough to match work to pupils' learning needs. This is compounded by the overuse of commercial materials that do not always challenge pupils.

Leadership and management are good. Governance is of a good quality. The headteacher provides strong and highly effective leadership. With the good support of the senior management team he has correctly identified the right things to move this school further forward. For example, parents confirm that communication between home and school has improved tremendously. Subject leaders are becoming increasingly involved in bringing about improvements in their subjects, working effectively in subject teams. School improvement planning identifies all the key components and reflects a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As such, the school is well placed to move further forward and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school and have settled well into the new routines. On entry, children's skills are above what is typical. Children achieve well and detailed records indicate that they make good progress. Leadership and management are good. The adults involved have a good understanding of all of the required areas of learning. They maintain records of achievement for each child in a practical and informative way so that work is matched to individual needs. Improved opportunities for children to learn in the outside area are supporting children's progress. There are strengths in areas of personal development, communication, language and

literacy and an understanding of shape and number. Good teaching enables children to make good progress. They reach levels above those expected for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure that teachers use information on pupils' progress to match work to pupils' different abilities and provide challenging tasks.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and they reach well above average standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils make insufficient use of their writing skills in other subjects.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment information shows that the standards in the current Year 6 class are above expectations in English, mathematics and science, but a greater number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities mean that standards are not quite as high as in previous years. There are no major differences between the achievement of girls and boys. The school met its demanding targets for the national tests in 2007 and inspection evidence demonstrates that it is on course to meet this year's targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

By the time they leave, pupils are mature and confident learners and are a delight to talk to. They willingly accept responsibilities for tasks around school including serving as playground buddies or librarians. They know the need to be truthful and trustworthy; attaining to the best of their ability. Pupils get on very well with one another and are sensitive to the needs of others. For example, when a pupil in one class could not find his pencil other pupils spontaneously offered him one of theirs. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average; their behaviour is excellent. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Pupils readily explain what they know about the culture of others and understand why people follow different traditions. Pupils trust and respect their teachers and are emphatic that they feel safe in school. They are confident that there is very little bullying which, should it occur they say, is always dealt with effectively. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the many opportunities to share in activities before and after school. They are very positive about the available healthy food options and have an excellent understanding of why a healthy diet helps them to grow and learn. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to work. They are in a very strong position to get the most out of their life in school and in the next phase of education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good resulting in pupils making good progress. Positive relationships, good subject knowledge and good organisation are strong features of most of the teaching. Where teaching is strongest, very good use of questioning and high expectations help pupils become conscientious and keen learners. For example, in an outstanding lesson the oldest pupils evaluated a classmate's writing and provided excellent, well thought out ideas. The school has recently introduced systems to track pupils' progress. The school is aware that the information this provides is not being used well enough to ensure that tasks in lessons are challenging for all pupils. Work from the previous year shows that too much work is based on commercial schemes that are not carefully matched to pupils' needs. As such, pupils are then prevented from using their skills to the full in other subjects, especially their writing skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have well planned programmes of support that help them make good progress. Teaching assistants support pupils very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is firmly founded on ensuring pupils' personal and social education is of a high quality. It is enriched by an outstanding range of extra-curricular clubs and activities including art, sport and music. Many visits to places of educational interest and four residential visits extend pupils' learning and personal development. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school is looking at even more ways of making all learning relevant to pupils' interests. Pupils enjoy their work and say how much they value all the extra activities open to them. They understand that ideas developed in one subject help their learning in other areas. Work to develop skills in writing has been successful in increasing the number of pupils who are attaining at higher levels. However, the improvements made in writing in English are not evident in written work in other subjects. Whilst there is much to celebrate, opportunities for independent research are less well developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are cared for well. The school's ethos is calm, well ordered and supportive. Staff are fully committed to pupils' welfare and pupils readily explain how adults help them. The school encourages pupils to eat healthily and the school lunch menu reflects this priority. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well by staff. Good systems have very recently been put in place to track pupils' progress, but it is too soon for the information gathered to contribute fully in planning pupils' learning. Pupils feel valued because teachers know them individually and take a great interest in them. The health and safety of pupils assumes a high profile and full risk assessments are carried out for every activity. Pupil safeguarding procedures meet all requirements. Child protection procedures are implemented and pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The determined leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the senior management team, is securely focused on building on current practice to move the school on further. There is a clear vision for the school's future direction. Self-evaluation procedures are of a good quality. For example, the new team has quickly identified the lack of a whole school system to track pupils' progress and rectified it. However, the information gathered is not yet being used effectively. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed and staffing ratios are good. Parents feel that there is now far more consultation with them and this is welcomed. The reorganised curriculum teams enable subject leaders to manage their responsibilities well and members of staff are more clearly focussed on raising standards. Finances are well managed with good staffing ratios being a key priority. Governors provide good quality support. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection with greater progress being made recently.

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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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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

24 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Dane Ghyll School, Cumbria, LA14 4PG

Thank you for the friendly welcome you all gave us both when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you and seeing some of you in lessons. It was a great joy to hear you sing as part of the school's act of worship. What really impressed us though was the way you have all worked hard in lessons.

I promised your headteacher that I would let you know what I thought. I am pleased to tell you that I agree with him and you that your school gives you a good standard of education. You do well in lessons and in tests because you work hard and understand the importance of this for the future. I agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons very interesting and that if you need help, you get it.

Your behaviour is excellent and I was very impressed with how polite you were. You benefit greatly from a large number of school clubs. You told me that you feel safe in school and that if problems occur an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it.

There are just two things I would like to happen to make your school even better. I want you to use your writing skills well, not just in English lessons but also in other subjects. I have asked your teachers to make sure that you are all challenged to achieve your very best in lessons.

Keep on working hard so that you can play a major part in ensuring that your school continues to be highly regarded by all who come into contact with it.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector