

Norman Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112219
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310817
Inspection dates	5–6 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Naylor
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Baskerville
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2004
School address	Norman Street Carlisle Cumbria CA1 2BQ
Telephone number	01228 607501
Fax number	01228 607502

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, so too is the number of pupils at an early stage of acquiring English. This is rising due to the influx of pupils of East European origin. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and rising. The school is located in an area of the city that experienced serious flooding during 2005 causing significant disruption to pupils and their families.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Personal development and care, support and guidance are good. The headteacher is supported by an experienced deputy and committed staff. One important outcome of their collaboration is that standards, reported as below average at the time of the previous inspection, are now average. Most parents express positive views of the school although some have concerns that it is not as informative or as accessible as it could be.

Pupils feel safe at school and know how to quickly access help and advice. Most enjoy lessons and behave well. They like discussing ideas with a 'talking partner' and enjoyed learning about stringed instruments when five visiting musicians captivated their attention by performing the 'Carnival of the Animals'. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the choices required to live fit and healthy lives. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and wider communities through daily responsibilities and fund-raising for worthy causes. Their progress in key skills is helping them to prepare satisfactorily for the future.

Achievement is satisfactory. Current standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and writing reflecting pupils' low starting points. The steady decline in the test results at the end of Year 6 has been halted and standards in English, mathematics and science are average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there are inconsistencies between classes. Some examples of good teaching exist in both key stages where pupils work productively and learn well. A significant minority of lessons, however, lack sparkle and do not engage the pupils sufficiently. When this occurs, more able pupils are not challenged enough and their progress is reduced. As a result of the variations in teaching, progress is uneven between Years 1 and 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, as do the pupils in the early stages of acquiring English but the more able could do better.

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets requirements. It lacks originality however and does not build in enough scope for pupils to pursue their own learning interests or work independently. Care and support are good with satisfactory academic guidance. Although pupils know their targets they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Some school leaders and governors lack the experience and skills required to monitor the school as rigorously. As a result, whilst the school's judgements of itself are broadly accurate, it lacks detail about the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of the curriculum. The school has improved since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to continue to do so in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children begin school with levels of development well below those typical for their age especially in language and communication skills, mathematical, social and emotional development. Teaching is good. This ensures children make good progress in all areas although some do not reach the expected goals by the end of Reception. Children benefit from good care and support, which promotes their personal development well. A good curriculum meets the needs of children. It provides a good balance between teacher led activities and those initiated by the children. This helps children to become increasingly independent when learning and improves social skills and promotes speaking and listening. Children enjoy the activities such as exploring the facilities of the outer area that are

much improved since the previous inspection. The Foundation Stage is led and managed very effectively. A dedicated staff team work efficiently to raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more pupils, including the most able, make consistent progress and reach higher standards.
- Improve the curriculum so that it includes experiences that are more stimulating for pupils' learning.
- Extend the roles of school leaders, including governors, in evaluating and improving the consistency of teaching and the quality of the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although the period of serious flooding slowed pupils' gains in the past, there is unevenness in the rate of learning by pupils which is attributed to inconsistencies in teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of acquiring English make good progress because they benefit from the personal support provided by skilled teaching assistants.

Since the last inspection standards at the end of Year 2 have been slowly rising. Although the school's results of assessments of Year 2 pupils dipped slightly in 2007, they remained average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Current standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Nonetheless, these pupils have made satisfactory progress from their relatively low starting point to Key Stage 1.

Currently, the school's records show that standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are average. The test results at the end of Year 6 had steadily declined in all the main subjects since the last inspection. School leaders successfully addressed this through provision of training and better assessment practices. School data show the decline has been halted. In 2007, the school's test results at the end of Year 6 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Whilst pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive, the more able pupils could do better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils think reflectively about issues such as personal responsibilities during assemblies. They are developing a good awareness of diversity of cultures due to their positive interactions with the current influx of European children. Behaviour is good. In the past two years there have been no exclusions. Pupils appreciate their 'Golden Time' as recognition of good conduct. Most pupils say they like coming to school. Most enjoy lessons especially those that involve practical work. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils feel safe in school knowing they can access help from adults and older pupils. Many pupils walk to school and eat and drink healthily. They are keen to participate in further recreational activities because they recognise the value of sport to being healthy and staying fit. This helped the school gain the Activemark in 2007 and

is contributing in its application for Healthy School status. Pupils serve the school well as councillors and prefects. They have a good record of raising funds for good causes including a local hospice. Pupils' satisfactory progress in key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepares them satisfactorily to cope with life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are pockets of good teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2 but the quality is inconsistent. Teachers plan their lessons with clear objectives. These are satisfactorily reviewed at the end of lessons; where teaching is good, these are shared effectively with pupils as learning progresses. In the better lessons, pupils are engaged quickly and their interest is held. Some teachers are making effective use of ICT to enhance the learning, for example, slowly revealing images of figures to stimulate discussion and writing about characters. Not all of the teaching is of this quality. In some lessons the pace of learning slows because teachers talk too much and they do not capture or hold the attention of their pupils long enough to consolidate learning. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with particular needs but the needs of the more able pupils are often not fully met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets requirements and helps pupils to make satisfactory progress but activities do not always inspire pupils enough and offer few opportunities for them to learn independently. Positive aspects are that provision for older pupils to learn French is being extended. Additional materials promoting social and emotional aspects of learning have extended provision for personal, social and health education well. The school makes good use of educational visits and visitors to enhance learning. At times special events are planned which add to the quality of learning; for example, the school's centenary is currently being celebrated with a focus on the Edwardian period. The good range of extra-curricular activities includes opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of art and sporting events. A good partnership with a local sports college enhances the sporting opportunities available. Music is extended effectively through opportunities to join the choir or by accessing specialist instrumental tuition. Pupils use these talents well to perform in the annual music evening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good in terms of pastoral care and satisfactory for academic guidance. The school provides a 'safe haven' for pupils because all adults are highly committed to pupils' welfare and well-being. Safeguarding, child protection procedures and risk assessments meet requirements. The school has taken swift action to address incidents of unsatisfactory conduct by pupils by revising the behaviour policy and introducing new procedures for pupil management. As a result, behaviour has improved. Good partnerships with other professionals ensure sensitive care and support for vulnerable pupils. Teaching assistants are well trained and they give consistently good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils at an early stage of acquiring English are supported well by a teacher with expertise in

this area. Parents are generally positive about the school and particularly praise the care and support.

Whilst guidance for personal development is very effective, academic guidance is satisfactory. Older pupils are aware of their targets in literacy but are not always sure of what they need to do to improve. Younger pupils enjoy seeing their names ascending the class 'learning tree' or 'rocket' showing exactly how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. It ensures that the school runs efficiently on a day to day basis and is safe and secure. Leaders have successfully promoted pupils' personal development and their actions have successfully halted a decline in standards at Key Stage 2. Targets for the end of Key Stage 2 are set for pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. Careful analysis of pupils' responses in science tests led to more planned opportunities to do investigations with the result that standards improved in 2007. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate, but some staff are relatively inexperienced in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and in evaluating the quality of the curriculum. As a result, some of the school views are over-generous in their judgements.

Staff work collaboratively to meet the school aims of having, 'a school community where all members are happy, safe and secure and able to achieve success'. Leaders are using the skills of external consultants effectively to enhance delivery of the action plans they have to raise standards and improve progress. Whilst the governing body makes sure that the school meets statutory requirements, their role in holding the school to account is not as advanced as it needs to be. New governors have been appointed but are at an early stage of exercising their responsibilities.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	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?	3
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?	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	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	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norman Street Primary School, Cumbria, CA1 2BQ

I am writing on behalf of all three inspectors to thank you for helping us when we inspected your school. You were friendly and helpful. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and visiting your classrooms. We were interested in looking at your work and photographs of visits you have made.

You attend a satisfactory school. It is friendly and happy place. You told us you feel safe and know how to get help when you need it. You behaviour is good. We know you understand the importance of a healthy diet and keeping fit. You told us you enjoy much of what school offers including visits to activity centres. Listening to visiting musicians enhances the satisfactory curriculum you receive.

You make good progress up to the end of the Reception year. Your progress varies in Year 3 to 6 but it is satisfactory, overall. When you are working with teaching assistants in small groups you regularly make good progress. Most of you reach average standards but those of you capable of higher standards could be challenged to do even more. Teaching is satisfactory and provides you with interesting things to do. We have asked the school to ensure that progress quickens. We have also asked that you have more opportunities to learn in more interesting ways. The headteacher and teachers have already made some plans to tackle these issues. We are sure you will do your best to help them. The school leaders and governors will work on keeping a closer eye on how well the school is doing.

We do hope you enjoy the remainder of this special centenary year of your school.

Yours sincerely

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector