

# Sedbergh Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112233
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	310821
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steve Isherwood HMI

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Linda Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Cullen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Long Lane Sedbergh Cumbria LA10 5AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 620510
<b>Fax number</b>	01539 622151

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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 issues: pupils' achievement, particularly at Key Stage 1; the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's own data, tests results, teachers' records, observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and the local authority (LA). Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school nationally, situated close to the centre of Sedbergh in Cumbria. Pupils are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds and the vast majority are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The school serves an extensive rural area. A number of families live outside the immediate locality. A lower proportion of pupils than normal are entitled to a free school meal and a smaller than average percentage has a learning difficulty and/or disability. When children start school, their attainment is generally in line with that expected for their age. The school has gained several awards including the Healthy Schools Standard, PE Activemark, Chartermark for Inclusion and the kite mark for Early Excellence in Education and Playwise.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'I feel confident that my child is challenged in all aspects of his learning'. 'We view the school and staff as an extension of our family'. These sentiments expressed by some parents and echoed overwhelmingly by others go to the heart of why Sedbergh Primary is an outstanding school. Pupils' achievements are excellent. They reach consistently high standards in their work and make exceptionally good progress in their personal development. Pupils behave very well, have positive attitudes and greatly enjoy their learning as demonstrated by their good attendance and their enthusiasm for the wide range of opportunities that the school provides. They have an excellent awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and a balanced diet. When asked to identify the best things about the school pupils emphasised that lessons are often fun, they feel very safe and everyone gets on well together. They found it difficult to think of any improvements that could be made. There was clear agreement that they liked 'everything!' and strong praise for the way that staff can be relied upon to help and support them. Older pupils take good care of younger ones; pupils and their families are well known. Staff are caring and vigilant and responsive to each individual. All required checks, systems and procedures are in place to safe-guard the pupils' well-being. Pupils express opinions, make decisions and show initiative through circle time sessions and the work of the school council. They raise substantial funds for charities and develop a strong social conscience. The school is held in high regard in the local community and has forged outstanding partnerships with other schools and agencies.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities come on in leaps and bounds from the moment they enter the school. By the time they leave in Year 6, the proportions reaching the expected Level 4 and at the higher Level 5 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents outstanding achievement considering their starting points. Nevertheless, the school is aware that the progress that some pupils make at the end of Key Stage 1, in reading and writing is not as rapid as elsewhere. This is because of past difficulties in securing permanent staff in Year 2 which has led to inconsistencies in the teaching and learning for some groups of learners, particularly the more able.

A significant factor in pupils' high achievement is that teaching is outstanding overall. Furthermore, the curriculum is very well planned with excellent opportunities for enrichment and enjoyment. Teachers have high expectations. Their good subject knowledge and effective questioning keeps pupils on their toes. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution and provide a very good layer of extra support in all classes. In the very best lessons pupils are encouraged to test and deepen their understanding by directing their own activities, applying their knowledge in real life situations and sharing their ideas with others. For example, in an outstanding science lesson in Year 6, pupils made model wind turbines and were able to explore the changes they could make to them by using their skills of research and scientific enquiry. In addition, pupils were challenged in their thinking by suggesting ways to produce energy in different climates. Where lessons are less successful the school recognises that learning could be enhanced still further if some teachers had greater confidence to broaden the range of teaching strategies to stimulate pupils' greater involvement in learning.

The success of the school is underpinned by outstanding leadership and management at all levels, spearheaded by the headteacher. She is passionate about maximising the potential of every child in a caring and structured environment where all pupils are encouraged to grow in confidence and self-esteem. She is very well supported by the drive and commitment of staff

and governors who share her vision and sense of direction. As a result, morale is high, teamwork is very strong and staff are forward thinking and reflective. As a group they are not complacent and actively seek ways to improve further the current position. This means that there is very strong agreement on the strengths of the school and where further improvements can be made. For example senior leaders are well aware that the school improvement plan requires some fine tuning to ensure an even stronger focus on raising achievement and sharper criteria for measuring success.

The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction and in holding it to account. Its members are extremely committed and offer high levels of support and challenge. They are confident in asking difficult questions and are involved in evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement.

The school had made outstanding progress since its last inspection. As a result and along with its other strengths, the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's love of learning begins in the Nursery. They make a good start and achieve well. The warm and welcoming atmosphere provides a positive climate for learning where children feel safe and secure. Within a stimulating environment activities are well chosen and children are given every opportunity to explore the world around them. As one parent commented, 'Each day is a new adventure for my child and the staff provide a varied curriculum which he thoroughly enjoys'. Teaching is purposeful, questions challenge children's thinking and practical learning is supported well by stimulating resources. For example, in one session, children made good progress in their language and communication by pretending to be vets in a clinic. Elsewhere, children discussed creatures in and around their homes and made their own spider's web with tape and string. In Reception, children wrote postcards to a friend and extended their vocabulary with role play activities at the seaside. Staff are skilled in knowing exactly how to intervene in activities to take learning forward. As a consequence, children become engrossed in their learning and have the confidence to choose activities for themselves.

Children's progress is checked regularly and provides a clear picture of what they need to learn next. This means that by the beginning of Year 1, most children are achieving and exceeding the levels expected from them and have made good progress. Parents are kept well informed and are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's learning. Leadership and management are effective and ensure that teachers work well as a team. Good links with Year 1 ensure continuity in learning.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress further in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### 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	1
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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

27 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Sedbergh Primary School, Cumbria, LA10 5AL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. It was a real pleasure to spend some time in your school, despite the rain. Next time I come to Sedbergh I will definitely bring my umbrella. I really enjoyed chatting to you around the school, in your classrooms and in the interview with the school council. You stated your opinions very clearly and they were very helpful to me. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

Firstly and most importantly, I would like you to know that you go to an outstanding school. You make excellent progress in your work and are very well taught and looked after. You told me that your school is a happy and safe place to be. I agree. I was very pleased to see how well you behave and how you help one another in lessons and around the school. I really liked the way you sang 'Shalom Shalom may peace be with you' in assembly. I was very impressed by the thoughtful and respectful way you discussed how we feel inside when we are angry or upset or when a pet or somebody close to us dies.

You told me that you enjoy your work and that your teachers help you to learn well by making your lessons exciting and often fun. I could see this for myself when those of you in Year 6 were making wind turbines, when pupils in Year 1 were writing about their walk along the river in the rain and when those of you in Year 5 were finding the area and perimeters of tricky irregular shapes.

Mrs Cullen and all of the staff work very hard to make the school as good as it can be and I am confident that it will continue to improve. To help with this, I have asked them to ensure that all of you make the best progress you can in your work. You can help by telling your teachers what makes your lessons exciting and what helps you to learn. Keep trying hard. I wish you and your families all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools