

Wreay C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112260
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310831
Inspection date	3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheila Mawer

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Graham
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Render
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2005
School address	Wreay Carlisle Cumbria CA4 0RL
Telephone number	01697 473275
Fax number	01697 473 275

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small school takes pupils from the local village and surrounding areas. Pupils are taught in three classes, and numbers are rising as a much higher than average proportion of pupils arrive mid-year. Only one pupil in the current Year 6 started in Reception. The social and economic background of pupils is broadly average and there is a below average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been very high since 2006. The school has undergone significant changes in staff over the last three years. The substantive headteacher is on maternity leave so an acting headteacher is employed for two days a week and a senior teacher covers for the rest of the week.

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 with outstanding features. It is an exceptionally happy place to learn and an integral part of the local community. It successfully fulfils its aim of 'valuing each child as a unique individual'. Parents overwhelmingly appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for their children. As one parent said, 'I travel a round trip of 48 miles to school. It's worth it to see my child so happy'. All pupils thrive in a strong ethos of respect and their personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour, enjoyment for school and appreciation of healthy and safe lifestyles are excellent. They develop into confident and responsible young people, well prepared to move on to secondary education. The school maintains excellent links with parents and outside agencies so that pupils are given every opportunity to succeed in a safe environment. These close links are particularly beneficial to the many pupils who join the school part way through their education. Some have not succeeded at other schools and are extremely vulnerable. Many have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Several parents commented on the dramatic improvement in their children's learning and attitudes since moving to the school.

Pupils achieve well. They make good progress and by Year 6 reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in mathematics and science and broadly average in reading and writing. There is a weakness in writing, as more able Year 2 pupils are not making enough progress to reach the higher Level 3. All pupils enjoy the good curriculum. It is brought to life by visits and visitors and through working with other schools and the local community. Subjects are often taught together to make the learning more relevant. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils in the infant class to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English and this is slowing their progress. Handwriting skills are generally weak across the school.

Good teaching includes very good relationships, successful management of a wide age and ability range and encouragement for pupils to develop their own ideas in lessons. Individual needs are largely met through well adapted work. Lessons do not always challenge the more able pupils in the infant class to write with enough precision and imagination. Pupils' willingness to work hard and learn well is boosted significantly by excellent, developmental marking and the chance to review their own targets. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, and is well placed to make further gains. This is because key staff are becoming more successful in their roles as coordinators. Together with well informed governors, they share in the effective leadership and management of the school. Resources are managed well to ensure that the school gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and effective leadership and management are successfully driving improvements. Children enter Reception with skills that are generally below what is typical for their age, but this often varies from year to year. The children benefit significantly in their learning from being taught together as a small group. It enables them to make good progress and reach expected levels for their age. Improvements have been made to encourage children to plan their own tasks. In a rich and safe learning environment, they often choose their own activities such as role-play; for example, some purposefully experimented with different liquids to make potion recipes. In good teaching, the imaginative tasks engage

all children, so they behave impeccably and stay focused on their work. They happily shared ideas and responded well to questions when making a monster map, caringly helping one another with difficulties. Many are confident to review their own work informally as the learning intention is always shared with them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2, especially for more able pupils, with more scope for writing in other subjects than English.
- Improve the handwriting skills of all pupils in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, they reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. More able pupils do well in these subjects and are on course to reach the higher Level 5. All pupils make good progress from their starting points in Reception, or since arriving at the school. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Because numbers in the school are small, standards fluctuate each year. Since 2003, results in national tests by the end of Year 6 have been broadly average to above.

By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in mathematics and science, and broadly average in reading and writing. There has been a pattern of broadly average to above standards in national tests over the past few years. Very few pupils reach the higher Level 3 in writing, although they often reach the higher level in mathematics, reading and science. This trend is set to continue, as more able pupils in the infant class are not making sufficient progress in their writing. Handwriting skills throughout the school are relatively weak and by Year 6, many pupils are not using a well formed joined script.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' very positive attitudes and their outstanding behaviour are key factors in the school's success. Attendance is good, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Relationships are excellent and pupils regard any form of bullying or racism as unacceptable. Care and respect for others shine through this small, caring community. During a gardening session, older and younger pupils worked harmoniously together to harvest vegetables for eating, as part of their healthy schools' initiative. Pupils' success in keeping fit is recognised in an Activemark award. Regular inter-school sports help to keep pupils active as well as providing opportunities to mix more widely within the local community. Pupils say they feel totally safe in their 'special school'.

Spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and cultural development is good. Spirituality is enhanced by close links with the church and in pupils' appreciation and protection of the environment. Visiting artists and special multi-cultural events, as well as fund raising helps pupils to understand the wider world. Pupils readily accept the responsibilities they are given and carry them out with great confidence and maturity. Although there is no school council, pupils clearly have a say in school matters. For example, Year 6 are planning and managing the budget for an end of term garden party for the whole community. Pupils are well equipped for the next stage in their education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers provide mostly good levels of challenge for the wide range of abilities and ages in the two classes. Lessons are well planned and evaluated to help improve the learning of individual pupils. There are occasions in writing when more able pupils in the infant class are not sufficiently challenged and, consequently, their learning and progress slow. Typically lessons are lively and interesting, involving practical tasks which, pupils say, 'makes the learning fun'. This helps them to concentrate and do their best work, as when pupils in the junior class wrote a description of a famous painting then researched the artist on the Internet. Strong relationships and good management of lessons mean that pupils work well independently. Pupils are confident to develop their own ideas but will approach an adult if they have a problem. Good teamwork between adults ensures very good support for the most vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Regular homework helps to extend the work covered in lessons and strong support from parents has a significant impact on progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is regularly reviewed to meet pupils' needs and interests. It generally helps pupils to develop good basic skills. Specialist teachers are employed for music and physical education to help to strengthen provision and promote higher standards and enjoyment for pupils. Provision for information and communication technology has improved with better resources including laptop computers for older pupils. Enrichment is good. Recently a theatre director worked with pupils to present a performance of Macbeth. This helps to nurture pupils' talents and their enthusiasm for school. The good focus on personal, social and health education gives pupils a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. The curriculum is adapted well to enable pupils with different abilities to reach their goals. However, there are limited opportunities for some younger pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects. The school does not run clubs regularly after school as most pupils travel considerable distances to their homes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and supported. Adults know each pupil very well and are totally committed to meeting their individual needs. Health and safety issues are given a high priority. Staff receive regular training and up to date information, particularly on child protection and risk assessment procedures for visits out of school. All aspects of safeguarding meet government requirements. Very good systems for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress have been established. Marking is extremely helpful in guiding pupils towards areas for improvement. Pupils informally assess their own progress at the end of lessons and review their personal targets in writing, mathematics and science. However, the writing targets for more able younger pupils are not always challenging enough to accelerate their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher successfully drives forward the work of the school despite a considerable teaching commitment. She effectively leads and supports a strong team of colleagues and is helping them to develop their management skills well. Through the formal review of their subject areas, coordinators play a valuable part in the self-evaluation process, accurately identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff share a determination to continue to improve the quality of provision. For example, issues have been addressed successfully since the previous inspection and standards have risen. The acting headteacher has successfully maintained the smooth running of the school. Governors are fully involved in the school. They provide effective support and challenge, greatly appreciated by the acting headteacher. An agreed programme for monitoring aspects of the school has increased their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has also strengthened their ability to be involved in self-evaluation and to hold the school to account. The school gives good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

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	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?	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	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?	1

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

4 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wreay CofE Primary School, Cumbria, CA4 0RL

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly to your school and making my visit so enjoyable. It was a pleasure to talk to you all during the day. Pupils in Year 6 were very helpful and I learnt a great deal about what makes your school so special. I agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school that has some outstanding features.

The excellent features of the school are your outstanding personal development and the care, support and guidance you receive. Your behaviour and enthusiasm for school and all it offers are first rate. You told me how keen you are to keep healthy and fit. When I asked about bullying, you assured me that there wasn't any because you are all friends together and feel totally safe. You said that one of the best things about going to your small school is that it is like one big family and you help each other all the time. Your teachers and all other adults really care for you all and their wonderful support helps you to learn well.

You are doing well in school, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6 and making good progress. This is because your teachers and other adults make the learning interesting and give you work that makes you think hard. The headteacher, acting headteacher and governors are doing a good job in making sure that you all receive a good education. There are lots of exciting things to enjoy in the good curriculum. I know how much the infant pupils enjoyed their sports afternoon with other schools during the inspection.

Even in a good school such as yours, the adults are keen to make it even better. Some of you in the infant class are going to be given harder work in writing to help you make more progress. All of you in the infant class will soon be able to practise your writing skills more in other subjects like science, history and geography. This will help you all to improve your writing. I know many of you in the school find handwriting quite difficult. Your teachers know you could do better. They are going to find ways to help you develop and improve your handwriting skills throughout the school. I hope you will all work hard to improve your writing. Good luck Year 6 with the garden party at the end of term. I hope it doesn't rain!

Yours sincerely

Sheila Mawer

Lead inspector