

Gosforth C of E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112294
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310840
Inspection date	22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Earley

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	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Pratt
Headteacher	Mr John Corran
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Wasdale Road Gosforth Seascale Cumbria CA20 1AZ
Telephone number	01946 725244
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of strategies to raise the standards of higher ability pupils; the consistency of teaching throughout the school; the effectiveness of assessment and tracking in helping to raise standards. Evidence was gathered from the observations of lessons, discussions with staff, pupils and governors; examining pupils' work, school assessment data and documentation including the school's self-evaluation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school in the village of Gosforth in rural Cumbria. Pupils are taught in five classes with two mixed age classes. Reception and Year 1 pupils are taught together as are Years 4 and 5. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

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 which gives good value for money. A significant factor in the good progress made by all pupils, whatever their background or ability, is that each pupil is well known and relationships are very good so that pupils usually approach their learning confidently. This is enhanced by the good leadership of the headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, who share a commitment to raise standards and improve provision.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and by the time they enter Year 1 most have reached and many exceeded the level expected for their age. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, usually reaching above average standards at the end of each key stage. The results of national assessments vary because of the small numbers in each year group. Results of teacher assessments and national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2007 were broadly average. School's records show these results represented good achievement for most pupils from their differing starting points and also taking into consideration the ability of the groups were less strong than usual. The pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the school identifies their needs well and offers effective support. The school's own data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicates that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on track to reach above average standards in national tests.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although a small minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour, evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that behaviour is good. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning which helps them to achieve well. The school provides lots of opportunities for pupils to take physical exercise and most pupils know the value of keeping fit and maintaining a healthy diet. This emphasis on healthy lifestyles is reflected in the school's achievement of the Sport Activemark and Healthy Schools Award.

The school fosters a very strong sense of community with many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and show initiative, for example, as trained play leaders or school councillors. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and this is evidenced by their above average attendance. There are strong links with local churches and the school plays an important role in the life of the local community. Good basic skills and the increasing maturity and self-confidence of pupils prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers make good use of assessment to plan work well suited to the different groups within the mixed age classes. Pupils are increasingly involved in setting their own targets for improvement, which gives them a good understanding of how well they are learning but the quality of marking is inconsistent so that pupils are not always clear on what they need to do in order to improve. Teaching assistants play an important role in lessons, particularly in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helping to ensure they make good progress. Lessons are typically interesting and briskly paced. Teachers have good subject knowledge which helps them to give clear explanations and ask challenging questions.

The curriculum is good. It is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Pupils extend their personal and social skills when they go on residential visits and deepen their understanding when they work with artists and theatre groups. The school is successful in providing a range of strategies to challenge higher ability pupils so that they make

good progress. There is a good focus on the skills of literacy and numeracy, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend these skills by using them in other subjects. The curriculum is further extended by the good use the school makes of specialist teaching of German and music and by using the expertise of other staff. There are good links with outside agencies, including local schools and industries and bodies such as the National Trust.

Care, guidance and support are good. This is a very close knit community where pupils and their families are well known by the school. A strong family feeling within the school helps pupils feel safe and secure. Many parents commented that their children feel happy at the school and one parent commented that, 'All staff are friendly and helpful both with the children and parents.' The Christian values of the school help to provide firm foundations of care and respect for each individual. This helps pupils to develop high self-esteem and has a positive impact on their learning. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are in place and government recommendations for safeguarding pupils are carefully followed. Systems for assessing progress are good and are enabling the school to set clear targets for improvement.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been instrumental in creating a caring and inclusive community in which there is a commitment to provide the best for each pupil. His clear vision for improvement is shared by staff and governors, leading to above average standards and good personal development. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to a realistic development plan. However, leaders at all levels have insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning to gain an insight into how to improve the quality of teaching still further. Governors play an important role in the school. They are very supportive but also conscientious in holding the school to account for its performance. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully resolved. Good evaluation of performance and a shared commitment to raise standards and improve provision give the school good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and it is well managed. Children make good progress and most reach the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception year and an increasing number exceed this level. Because relationships are very good and children and parents are made to feel very welcome children settle in very quickly. Teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of their children and keep careful check on their progress so that tasks are well suited to their abilities. The curriculum is stimulating so that children want to learn and do their best. The atmosphere is happy and challenging and pupils grow in confidence so that they work equally well independently and in teacher-directed activities. Because Reception children share the same classroom as Year 1 pupils, there are close curriculum links between the different age groups which help to enhance continuity of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for leaders to monitor lessons so that they have a clearer understanding of how to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils know clearly what they need to do in order to improve.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills through their use in other subjects.

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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	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	2
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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gosforth C of E School, Cumbria, CA20 1AZ

Thank you for your warm welcome when I came to visit. Yours is a good school. I really enjoyed my visit because you were so kind and helpful. I was very impressed by your understanding of how to take plenty of exercise and eat healthily in order to keep fit. I was also impressed by the way play leaders help others and by the way the school council helps to make the school a better place. I think your idea of the camcorder in the bird box and your plans to collect cans to help the environment are really useful and exciting.

These are some of the things your school does well.

- Teaching is good and teachers make learning interesting so that you make good progress.
- Your school is a very caring place, like a big family, so that you all feel safe and well looked after.
- You go on lots of interesting visits, have visitors into school and enjoy after school clubs and this helps your learning.
- You are well prepared for when you move on to secondary school.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors work well together in order to improve the school and help you to improve your learning.

Here are some of the things that the school is going to do to get even better.

- Teachers are going to visit classrooms more often to see how lessons can be improved even further.
- Better marking of your work will show you more clearly how to improve.
- You will have more opportunities to improve your literacy and numeracy skills by using them in different subjects.

Thank you again for your warm welcome. I hope birds decide to nest in your box this spring so that you can watch them on the cam-recorder.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead inspector