

Culgaith C of E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112302
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310844
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	34
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gillan Watt
Headteacher	Ms Lynn Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Culgaith Penrith Cumbria CA10 1QL
Telephone number	01768 88655
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Age group	3–8
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Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The pupils' achievement and the standards they reach particularly at the end of Year 2 and 3.
- The quality of care, guidance and support; in particular the quality of guidance given to improve the quality of pupils' work.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management and their impact on pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data, the school's records of pupil progress, observations of lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work, the Harvest Festival Assembly in the village church, break and lunchtime and the school's priorities for further improvement. Discussions with pupils, staff and governors were held and questionnaires returned by parents were taken into account. 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 judgements, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included in the report where appropriate.

Description of the school

This is a very small village voluntary aided first school whose pupils live in Culgaith or surrounding villages. All pupils are from a White British heritage. Currently no pupil is entitled to a free school meal and the overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school works collaboratively as part of a small schools' cluster to develop curriculum and other aspects of provision. As part of its extended provision the school provides a breakfast club, Nursery lunch club and study club after school. The school also hosts, one afternoon a week, a session for parents and pre-school children which is organised and led by volunteers.

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 a number of outstanding features. At the heart of the school's marked improvement since the previous inspection is the explicit vision of the headteacher which provides every child with opportunities to succeed. The outstanding personal development, care and support reflect the efforts that are made to ensure all pupils are appreciated as individuals. All have a real sense of belonging. Parents are totally supportive of what the school does for their children and recognise that it places equal emphasis on raising achievement and developing personal and social skills. The comment, 'they make my child feel safe and secure and his confidence has doubled enabling him to succeed' is typical of parent views. All this is underpinned by Christian values, for example, the Harvest assembly promoting respect for those things in life that are precious using the 'Sightsaver' charity as an illustration. The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion.

As a result of good teaching pupils achieve well, behave exceptionally well and are keen to support and help one another. Older pupils take pride and great care supporting younger children, for example, during the Nursery lunch club. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their attendance is consistently much higher than the national average. From the breakfast club to the after-school club pupils thrive on the wide range of interesting learning activities. As one parent put it, 'they need to be happy in school and our children are just that'.

Children start school with skills broadly typical for their age although, some children have difficulties with aspects of communication, language and literacy. They make good progress to reach standards that exceed expectations for their age by the end of Year 3. Standards at Year 2 have been rising over the last four years although in 2007 they were below average reflecting the nature of the group; half the pupils had learning difficulties. For 2008, provisional test results show an improvement and demonstrate that pupils' achievement is good. Despite the successful work of staff to raise literacy and numeracy standards, the quality of handwriting, presentation and layout of work often lacks refinement and sophistication.

Teachers have exceptionally warm relationships with pupils and the level of challenge is normally high ensuring that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. In a mixed Reception and Year 1 class, teams of pupils were totally absorbed constructing a robot on the grass from different shaped waste containers. Pupils are expected to think for themselves and be creative although occasionally learning could be made even more demanding. The really good and developing curriculum makes a substantial contribution to the pupils' personal development. This includes experience of different cultures and beliefs. It focuses on pupils' creative talents and skills and is effectively tailored to capture and sustain their interest. Really good use is made of curriculum initiatives as part of the small schools collaborative, for example, Artiscam; a project combining art and information and communication technology (ICT). Older pupils have acquired the skills to produce animated computer sequences. In Year 2 and 3 a one night 'sleepover', prepares pupils for later residential experiences. All this prepares pupils very well for later life.

Care and support for each individual, regardless of ability, is fundamental to all that the school attempts. All staff do their utmost to ensure that pupils benefit from school life. This is evident in the very strong partnerships with parents and the quality of agency support for individual pupils, including potentially vulnerable pupils. Child protection and safeguarding procedures meet government requirements fully. Pupils say that they feel very safe and know that staff are always on hand if they have any worries or concerns. They fully appreciate the benefits of

a healthy lifestyle and are taught the skills of managing risk, for example when using the internet or setting up a 'Fireman Sam' assembly point outside. Pupils are aware of their challenging targets and receive really good guidance which demonstrates how they can improve their work. They are given the confidence to assess their own work and increasingly older pupils take responsibility for their own learning. The checking of pupil progress is thorough and any slips in progress are highlighted. Intervention is prompt and effective.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is capably supported by a talented team of governors and staff. Governors are proactive checking all aspects of school performance. School self-evaluation is accurate and leaders display a determination to continue to improve. Improved ICT skills and assessment is the result of adopting successful improvement strategies which are carefully checked for their impact. The quality of what the school provides before, at lunchtime and after school engages families and boosts children's learning and development. The headteacher has recognised that higher expectations and challenge are required to ensure presentation and layout of work continues to improve. Successful leadership, very effective partnerships, outstanding personal development, care and welfare and imaginative extended provision which promotes positive attitudes to learning demonstrates that the school offers good value for money and has a very good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is well led and managed. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although for some communication and language skills are a little below expectations. They get off to a confident start and settle quickly as all benefit from a successful pre-school experience. Strong partnerships with parents make certain that induction arrangements work exceptionally well. Individual needs are quickly assessed and tasks matched to each child. The school helps to provide a stimulating and imaginative range of learning experiences to explore, both indoors and outdoors. Some learning in the excellent outdoor wildlife area is especially thought provoking. There is a good balance between child initiated and adult directed learning. As a result, children develop independence, gain skills and knowledge and achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1 all children reach the standards expected for their age with half exceeding them. The children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Children benefit from highly effective welfare and support. They behave exceptionally well and gain very good social skills, for example, happily joining the main school as part of their lunch club. The breakfast club ensures that those children who attend begin the day prepared and ready for learning. The headteacher has nurtured a committed and skilled team of staff who are strengthening approaches to boost learning, for example, exploiting phonics strategies to encourage the children's desire to write.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of handwriting and the presentation and layout of work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children

Inspection of Culgaith CofE First School, Cumbria, CA10 1QL

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school. I really enjoyed observing you in lessons, at play, in your Harvest Festival assembly, talking to you and your staff about your school and looking at your work. Now I want to tell you what I thought.

Culgaith is a good and improving school with a number of outstanding features. Here are some of the many things I liked about your school.

- You told me that you really like coming to school and that you feel safe.
- You told me that you really enjoyed your lessons and cherish the excellent relationships with your staff. I can see why; you have some very good staff that make your learning challenging yet fun.
- You are achieving well and improving the standards you reach. You should be pleased.
- You behave exceptionally well in classrooms and in the outside play areas. You work hard in lessons and get on with work without too much supervision from staff.
- Your school staff take exceptional care of you. They are really keen to make sure you are happy and feel safe.
- All of you play a part in running the school through the work of the school council.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff work especially hard to make sure your parents are involved in your learning.

I am confident that you and your staff could make the school even better and this is what I would like to see happen now.

- Not all of your handwriting, presentation and layout of your work is completed as perfectly as it could be. I have asked the school to do more to make sure that you use more grown-up methods to write and present your work. You can help by making sure you follow the advice and examples given to you by staff.

You are lucky to go to a school with such a happy, friendly atmosphere. Thank you for helping with the inspection and best of luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector