

# Crosthwaite C of E School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112317
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	310850
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Gornall 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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Woodcock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Pam Warren
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Crosthwaite Kendal Cumbria LA8 8HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 568471
<b>Fax number</b>	0000

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The HMI evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the quality of the Foundation Stage. This was done by gathering evidence from observing lessons, examining a sample of the pupils' books, scrutinising school documentation and questionnaires completed by parents, and by talking with pupils, parents, the clerk to the governors, the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 coordinator, an officer from the local authority and the headteacher. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the HMI found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were accurate and justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This much smaller than average primary school is located in a rural village in the Lake District. Its popularity is increasing and the number of pupils attending the school is rising. The proportion of pupils joining the school at ages other than reception age is higher than in most schools. The pupils are drawn from the local village, the surrounding rural parish and from further afield. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. Less than ten per cent of the pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is lower than in most schools and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. When pupils start school in the recently opened nursery or in the Reception class, their knowledge and skills are slightly better developed than is typical for their age, especially in speech and social development.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Crosthwaite provides a good quality of education; it is an improving school that sets its sights high. It has retained its warm and friendly family atmosphere whilst focussing increasingly on achieving better outcomes for the pupils. The staff work hard and they know the pupils very well. The school has particular strength in the good care and support it provides for the pupils who feel safe, valued and eager to learn. The school's self-evaluation paints an accurate picture of its effectiveness. The headteacher has steered the school successfully through a period of change to foster improved relationships within school and with the wider community, broaden the curriculum and strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, staff's expectations of what the pupils can do are now much more commensurate with the pupils' abilities. The quality of teaching is good overall, including some that is outstanding and a small proportion that is satisfactory.

Standards have risen since the last inspection and are above the national and local average. The vast majority of pupils are working at the level expected for their age and some are working beyond this. In the 2007 national tests, provisional results for the school indicate that all of the pupils who took the tests at age seven and at age 11 gained the nationally expected age-related level and a significant proportion reached the higher levels. The pupils are making good progress throughout the school, including the significant proportion that joined the school during Key Stage 2. These pupils are helped to integrate into the life of the school quickly and this was commented on positively by parents who appreciate the care and thoughtfulness of the school in promoting friendships and making new pupils feel welcome.

Across the school, much more of the teaching is good or better than at the time of the last inspection. In the best lessons, teaching is planned well so that the intended learning outcomes are clearly stated for the different ages and abilities of the pupils. Lively teaching stimulates the pupils' interest through effective questioning, useful demonstration and challenging activities. The teaching that is satisfactory has some of these positive traits, but does not plan and provide activities that meet the wide range of ages and abilities in the class. As a result, progress occasionally slows and the pupils' concentration becomes less focused. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally thrive and achieve well, because of the support and encouragement from adults in school.

The school rightly judges the pupils' personal development to be good. The pupils behave well and share a real sense of belonging to the school. Older pupils support younger ones at break and lunchtimes and readily play games with them. Parents have a very high regard for the school. They comment that their children are happy, generally doing well and, in several cases, growing in confidence after coming from other schools. The pupils regard Crosthwaite as a safe school where occasional arguments are quickly settled 'and we are all friends again'. Behaviour in and around the school is good. School councillors are proud of their part in helping to make the school 'an even better place to be'. Pupils are very enthusiastic about going on educational visits, having swimming lessons and playing sport. They are less certain about how well they are doing, what their targets are, or what they need to do to improve. This reflects the variable quality of the teachers' marking; there are few specific comments in pupils' books on what pupils need to do to make their work better.

The school has introduced a computer based tracking system to monitor carefully the progress being made by the pupils. As a result, the headteacher and teachers are now tracking pupils'

progress and setting 'challenges' at Key Stage 1 and 'targets' at Key Stage 2. The analysis of the information gained provides the sharpness needed for the headteacher and senior staff to decide if pupils' achievement and the quality of provision are good enough. In turn, this is strengthening their capacity to decide where resources and efforts would be best placed to make a difference. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

There are thirteen pupils in the Foundation Stage; four are taught part-time in the nursery and nine Reception-aged children alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the mixed Key Stage 1 class. The Foundation Stage is effectively managed and organised. A significant positive feature is the high adult to pupil ratio which, coupled with good and purposeful teaching, ensures that the children make good progress. The nursery is small and resources are rather limited but this is compensated by good outdoor learning and play areas. For example, the outdoor 'cottage hospital' housed in a large wooden play building provides a really effective and stimulating role play environment. This was very evident when the nursery children were engaged in role play activities pretending to be concerned patients ordering prescriptions for the recent outbreak of clearly visible 'chicken pox'! The reception children are very well integrated into the Key Stage 1 class. Good and effective teaching ensures they are provided with purposeful activities that are fun, interesting and have a clear focus on promoting learning. There is a good range of practical activities available and an appropriate balance between those the children choose for themselves and those directed by the teacher. Classroom support staff, including adult and parent helpers, are guided well by the teacher and make an effective contribution to the high level of adult-child interaction that takes place. All of the pupils meet, and many exceed, the early learning goals expected for their age by the time they leave the Foundation Stage.

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

- Ensure that all lessons include an appropriate range of activities in order to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities.
- Ensure that teachers' marking tells pupils how they can improve their work and where appropriate relate this advice to their personal targets.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<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>	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	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	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

17 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Crosthwaite C of E School, Cumbria, LA8 8HT

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was good to hear your views and to find out about life at Crosthwaite School.

I agree with you that Crosthwaite is a 'very friendly and warm school'. In fact one of you said 'it's like one big family'. Your school is providing you with a good education. Your teachers and helpers really work hard and take good care of you. Some of you told me that you joined the school after attending other schools first and noticed how friendly and welcoming the teachers and children were at Crosthwaite. I was pleased to hear that you know what to do when you have a concern. Not all of you were quite sure where you were up to in your subjects such as mathematics, or what you needed to do to improve; for example, you were not too sure about your targets.

It was also good to see you having fun in the playground and in the new play area and working hard in lessons. I enjoyed reading your stories and looking at your work on display around the school. Your classrooms are bright and interesting. I enjoyed eating my lunch with some of you in the dining area at lunchtime. You told me how much you liked your school and some of the fun things that you get to do.

I had a super time when I visited the nursery and saw the 'cottage hospital' and I especially thank one of the children who kindly offered me some Calpol in case I wasn't feeling well.

To help Crosthwaite to be an even better school, I have asked the governors, headteacher and teachers to:

- try to make your lessons even more interesting by making sure the activities you are asked to do are suitable for different ages and groups in your class. In other words that they are not too easy, or not too hard
- ensure that when they mark your work they suggest some ways in which you can make your work even better, linked to the personal targets some of you have in the front of your books.

I know you will want to do your bit to help your teachers make your school even better than it is now.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Gornall

Her Majesty's Inspector