

Grayrigg C of E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112320
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310853
Inspection date	7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Nigel Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Grayrigg Kendal Cumbria LA8 9BU
Telephone number	01539 824676
Fax number	01539 824676

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated in a village where socio-economic conditions are better than average. Pupils come from the village and surrounding area and all are from White British families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and the percentage eligible for free school meals is very low.

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 has some outstanding elements. It is at the heart of its local community with which it has very good relationships. The vast majority of parents and pupils have nothing but praise for the school and its family atmosphere. The comment of one parent typifies the large majority of views, 'All staff are helpful, friendly and great towards the children.' The quality of pastoral care and ensuring the well-being of all pupils is excellent.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well in all areas of school life. In the Foundation Stage, children get off to a good start. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and overall standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. The very small numbers of pupils in each year group demands that all assessment data is treated with care. Inspection evidence shows that in recent years, achievement has been better in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. This is not now the case. Progress has improved in Key Stage 1 because greater attention is being given to challenging more able pupils. Teachers' assessments in 2007 were below average in Key Stage 1. This is linked to a high proportion of pupils having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In Key Stage 2, the 2007 test results showed that standards were average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Across the school, pupils are articulate, well spoken and do well in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good strides in lessons as a result of effective support by teaching assistants.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. This contributes to the pupils' excellent behaviour and love of learning. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. The pupils make a good contribution to the local community. Most develop into mature, confident individuals, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The potential however, for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and to have a say in the way the school is run, is underdeveloped.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets all requirements but opportunities are missed for pupils to extend their basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication (ICT) skills across the curriculum. It is enriched by a thoughtful range of educational visits, visitors to school and after school clubs. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and ensures that these pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. Whilst the achievement of more able pupils is generally good in English, mathematics and science, pupils with talents and skills in other areas of learning are not developed enough.

The headteacher provides good leadership. She successfully blends a large teaching commitment with the demands of management and administration. The school has an effective school improvement planning system which is informed by a largely accurate school self-evaluation. Governance is satisfactory and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. It does not check closely enough on the demands made on the headteacher to ensure that best use is made of her time in managing the school. Finances are carefully managed to give good value for money. As a result, resources are good and outdoor facilities for play are excellent. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has good capacity to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Good teaching overcomes limitations of the accommodation so that children experience a wide range of stimulating activities. A good balance is struck between the focused teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills and providing opportunities for children to lead their own learning. After starting school with skills that are typical for children of their age, but with good levels of personal, social and emotional development, children make good progress. The great majority reach the level expected for their age by the end of Reception and an increasing number exceed this level. Improvements to outdoor learning resources for Reception children are imminent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more experiences in the curriculum for pupils with skills and talents and also plan more opportunities for pupils to extend their basic skills in other subjects.
- Give pupils more say in the way the school is run and develop their ability to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Strengthen the role of the governing body in checking on the demands made of the headteacher.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. The extremely small year groups mean that the results of national assessments and tests in Years 2 and 6 need to be considered alongside further information about the progress of individual pupils. In Key Stage 1, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 indicate overall standards are lower than in previous years. This does not show deterioration in the school but reflects the increase in pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Inspection evidence shows that as result of recent improvements in teaching, progress is good. Data provided by the school, supported by inspection observations show that the current Year 2 pupils are doing better than is expected for their age. There is a particular strength in reading and speaking and listening.

The 2007 results of national tests in Year 6 show standards are above average in English and average in science and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 and standards overall are above average. Pupils continue to do particularly well in reading. The school sets challenging targets which shows it has higher expectations of the current Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The educational provision produces happy, confident and mature individuals well equipped for their next stage of education. Pupils have a pride in their appearance and show courtesy at all times. Their behaviour is excellent and they love learning. Attendance is above average. These positive outcomes contribute to good progress in lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to treat others and form excellent relationships. Everyone is part of a happy community within the school. Educational visits to places as far away as Bradford successfully develops pupils' awareness of other cultures

including those who live in an urban environment. Pupils willingly gather funds and resources to help those less fortunate than they are. Most have a good knowledge and understanding of the choices required to stay safe. They understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy. Although pupils have good levels of self-esteem, they are not as skilled as they might be in taking responsibility for their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are prepared carefully to accommodate the demands of the wide range of ages in each class. Effective deployment of teaching assistants enables the specific needs of older pupils in Year 6 and younger ones, in the Foundation Stage, to be fully met. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils which motivates pupils to work hard. Good use is made of assessment data to plan work that challenges more able pupils in lessons as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pace of lessons is suitably brisk which keeps pupils interested. There are some inconsistencies in the way teachers teach. This is most noticeable in the expectations for pupils to get involved in their own assessment. Not all pupils know what they need to do to improve because marking is not always clear enough about what pupils need to do next. Whilst parents are happy with the quality of teaching, a few are confused about the expectations for homework for pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils say that they like their lessons and find their teachers are very helpful and supportive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It is enriched by good links with other schools which broadens pupils' experiences. The curriculum is planned with care to manage the demands of the mixed age classes. There are some very good examples of making learning relevant to pupils' lives, for example by using the nearby stream as a focus for an investigation involving science and geography. Overall, however, subjects tend to be planned discretely and this reduces opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to new situations. The inclusion of French for most pupils contributes to pupils' understanding of other languages and cultures. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. However, there is a lack of a clear strategy to develop the knowledge and abilities of those pupils with particular skills and talents. A well balanced programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education prepares pupils well for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and guidance are good with outstanding levels of pastoral support. The school is a safe, happy community which enables pupils to grow in confidence. Pupils feel that staff support them very well. They know that if they have any concerns these will be listened to. All statutory requirements to safeguard pupils are very well managed. The safety of pupils has a high priority. The school takes all reasonable steps to minimise risk for example, with good supervision at outdoor play. All health and safety procedures are followed and educational visits and activities are planned with safety in mind.

Each pupil is known very well by all staff. Their progress and achievement is understood. Better use of records of their progress, however, would sharpen the support for talented pupils. The school has very good systems to ease children into school in the Foundation Stage. Strong links with secondary schools helps pupils to make a good transition at the age of eleven.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The vision and energy of the headteacher has brought about positive change in the school in recent years with a more effective staffing structure, rising standards and the creation of good quality school buildings. A good staff team has been formed but the headteacher still tends to take on most of the responsibilities of management. There is a combined commitment to improvement and a determination to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. The professional development of staff takes a priority which makes sure that the school continues to adjust to new initiatives and expectations. Systems to monitor standards, teaching and learning contribute to generally accurate school self-evaluation. In turn, this contributes to a clear picture of what is needed to move the school forward. The school is already responding to their findings as can be seen in the improvements made in setting pupils' challenging targets. This is boosting standards by ensuring that the more able reach their potential in English and mathematics. The headteacher and staff continually improve the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is undergoing a transition with a new chair and some newly appointed personnel. Its role in supporting the management of the school, especially in monitoring the demands made on the headteacher, is currently underdeveloped.

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	3
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	3
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

8 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grayrigg C of E School, Cumbria, LA8 9BU

You are quite right in your belief that your school is good. It has some excellent features too. Your behaviour is outstanding and you make warm relationships with others. You are all very well cared for by all of the staff.

I found you friendly and confident young people. You clearly enjoy school and work hard in lessons. This helps you to do well in your work and reach good standards overall. You do particularly well in reading.

Your headteacher has made some important changes to the school in the last year or so. The teaching structure has been altered so that you all get better quality teaching, the building has been improved and those of you who are good at English and mathematics are getting harder work. There is still some more to do. The school has been asked to:

- help you to take more responsibility for your own learning and to have more opportunities for your opinions to be heard
- find ways of enabling those of you who are talented in different aspects to develop their skills further
- find more ways for you to practise your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects
- look for more ways to help staff with the amount of work they have to do.

Those of you who find learning difficult are given lots of support which helps you to do well in lessons. You are fortunate to have such a well maintained school with excellent outdoor facilities for outdoor play.

Your headteacher gives your school good leadership and makes sure that everyone working in the school does their best for you. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne

Lead inspector