

Patterdale C of E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112326
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310856
Inspection date	9 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat Johnson
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	Patterdale Penrith Cumbria CA11 0NL
Telephone number	01768 482383
Fax number	01768 482383

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	9 April 2008
Inspection number	310856

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized school is situated in the Lake District National Park. The area served by the school is rural and isolated. Children are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds. A number of families live outside the immediate locality. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of children identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the number of children eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Our children are flourishing socially and emotionally. They are excelling in their academic work. What more could we ask for?' This sentiment, expressed by one parent and echoed overwhelmingly by others is the essence of what makes Patterdale an outstanding school. Pupils reach above average standards in their work and make excellent progress. Their personal development is outstanding. They feel safe and secure and are happy and enthusiastic learners. They have an outstanding awareness of how to keep fit and eat healthily. This is because of excellent provision and high standards of care and support for each individual. High quality relationships are the hallmark of the school and reflect the strong Christian ethos that prevails. There is a tangible feel of everyone working together in a caring, nurturing environment where friendship and respect for one another come shining through. As a consequence, pupils behave very well, have positive attitudes to learning and get on well with their peers. This is a school with a strong family feel at the heart of the community that extends a warm welcome to everyone who walks through the door. There are excellent partnerships with other schools and agencies.

A significant factor in pupils' high achievement is the consistently strong teaching from the Foundation Stage to Year 6 with outstanding practice, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, the curriculum is exceptionally well planned with a strong emphasis on the development of key skills and first hand practical experiences. Teachers are skilled in planning a range of exciting activities to capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. Teaching is often characterised by lively questioning, stimulating debate and opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in different situations. As a result, pupils make excellent progress from the moment they enter the school and are eager to learn. By the time they leave at age 11, pupils' standards are above average in all core subjects. Nevertheless, pupils' progress in writing is less rapid than that in reading, mathematics and science and not enough able pupils reach the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well because information about their progress is used effectively and they receive very good additional support.

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher and the drive and commitment of senior staff to improve, underpin the success of the school. Everyone pulls in the same direction and staff give of their best. Teamwork is strong and morale is high. The school is not complacent and there is clear agreement on where further improvement is required. For example, senior leaders are well aware that pupils could make more progress in their writing and have implemented action to raise achievement further.

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. It has the potential to continue to improve because of the very effective support of governors and the strong commitment that exists within the school to raise achievement further and maintain high levels of personal development for pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage is delivered in a joint Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. Despite some limitations of space and access to outdoor play areas, the outstanding nature of the provision ensures that all children are extremely well cared for and make excellent progress. When children start school their levels of learning vary enormously but overall they are broadly typical for

their age. They get off to a flying start in a structured and stimulating environment where expectations are high, relationships are second to none and teaching is of a high quality. As a consequence, children settle quickly into routines and have very positive attitudes to their learning. They treat each other kindly and enjoy taking responsibility. Their levels of independence and confidence are particularly impressive. Staff work effectively as a team and have a clear understanding of how young children learn best. This means that learning activities are well targeted on key learning goals that match well with the children's stage of development. Often these are linked to a theme such as animals or traditional stories from a range of cultures. Staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use this information to plan further challenges. By the end of the Reception year, after only three terms, the majority of children have reached above the levels expected nationally in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Parents feel welcome into the classroom at all times and are kept well informed about their child's progress. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in writing, particularly for the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards fluctuate year-on-year because of the very small numbers of pupils within the school and the different composition of each year group. Nevertheless, pupils' current work, as well as the test results from 2007, shows that standards are above average and the progress pupils make in relation to their starting points is outstanding.

Although children start school with a wide range of abilities that vary from year to year, most enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical for their age. The outstanding provision in the early years ensures that children settle quickly and make great strides in their learning. By the end of the Reception year all have made better than expected progress in reaching and exceeding the national expectations for their age. Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average. A notable success was that all children attained Level 2, as expected for their age in all core areas. Although above average numbers achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics, no pupil did so in writing.

Work in lessons and in pupils' books shows that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress as they move through the school to Year 6. In the national tests for 2007, standards at Key Stage 2 were above average and challenging targets were met. All pupils attained Level 4, the standard expected for their age in all core subjects and some pupils achieved more highly than this at Level 5.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and contributes significantly to their excellent progress. The pupils are self-assured, very well mannered and display first-rate attitudes to learning. Very good attendance mirrors their enjoyment of school and their willingness to take part in all that the school provides. Pupils feel safe and mature into well rounded and thoughtful young people

with clear values of honesty, respect and tolerance. Older pupils take good care of younger ones and through the school council, they make a positive contribution to school life.

Pupils have an outstanding awareness of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Their readiness to wash their hands, eat fruit at playtimes and take part in physical activities shows a rapidly expanding understanding of the importance of good hygiene, diet and exercise. Gaining the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards, together with walk-to-school initiatives confirm the school's strong commitment to pupils' health. The pupils have a strong social conscience: they raise substantial funds for charities and are proud to go out of school to sing in church and perform in the annual Christmas concert for the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding and ensure that pupils are motivated to learn and make excellent progress in their work. The teaching is characterised by well planned, interesting lessons that build well on pupils' prior knowledge and individual needs. Expectations are high, the pace of learning is rapid and teaching assistants provide high quality support. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes. In all lessons, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves in carefully crafted activities that promote high levels of discussion and independent learning. Effective teamwork ensures that activities are very well planned for those who need extra support. All pupils benefit greatly from the constant praise and encouragement they receive from staff. Parents are very positive about the ways in which the school keeps them informed about the progress their children are making.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Innovative, creative and exciting opportunities based securely on the needs and interests of all learners underpin the school's outstanding curriculum. Activities are broad, balanced, and well planned with a strong emphasis on the development of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The teaching of these subjects is made more meaningful to pupils through a wide range of topics and themes which link the learning together well and are enriched by an impressive array of visits and visitors. Consequently, pupils learn skills within a context that they can relate to, are motivated to succeed and have a strong desire to learn. For example, pupils have taken part in a recent enterprise initiative in conjunction with local businesses which introduced them to the concepts of money and financial planning. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, as well as the school's residential activity trip, enrich pupils' experiences and add considerable enjoyment to their learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils who confirm that they are well looked after and feel safe and secure. Parents' questionnaires overwhelmingly support this view. It is also evident in the excellent relationships that exist and the fact that the pupils are very well known to staff. As a result, pupils are confident to approach their teachers with any problems,

safe in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. Pupils with social or learning difficulties are very well supported and external agencies are effectively used to enhance this provision. Excellent communication with parents and the privately run nursery ensure that children settle quickly and are very well supported from the moment they start school. All required checks, systems and procedures are in place to safeguard the pupils' well-being.

Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and for tracking their achievement are very effective. All pupils are involved in the setting of their own targets. Procedures for marking pupils' work are much improved. This means that teachers are very clear about what pupils need to learn next and that pupils are more aware of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management lie at the heart of the school's work and ensure that all pupils achieve very well and make excellent progress in their learning. The headteacher is highly effective, leads by example and works with energy and commitment to drive the school forward. She is passionate about extending pupils' experiences and ensuring that all pupils who leave the school can look back with happy memories of their time there. She is very well supported by an equally committed team of staff and governors who share her vision and high expectations. As a result, teamwork is strong and there is clear agreement on the strengths of the school and where further improvement can be made.

The school is very well supported by a committed and dedicated group of governors. They play a key role in shaping the school's direction and in holding it to account. They provide very good levels of challenge and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and in evaluating the school's performance. As a consequence, and along with its other strengths, the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

10 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Patterdale C of E School, Cumbria, CA11 0NL

Thank you all very much for the friendly way in which you helped me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed chatting to you in the playground, in lessons and in the interview with members of the school council. You told me how much you enjoy coming to school and having spent the day with you, I can understand why. You go to an outstanding school that is such a happy and safe place to be. Everyone gets on so well and you help one another in lessons and at playtime, which is lovely to see. I was really pleased to see how well you behave at all times and the care and concern you have for others.

You told me that you enjoy your work when you do 'good stuff' in lessons and when your teachers make things interesting and fun. I agree. I could see this with my own eyes when you acted out the story of 'Mrs Armitage on wheels', when some of you went looking for creatures in their natural habitats in the school grounds and when those of you in Years 5 and 6 were making periscopes in science. I could also see how well you understand fractions when some of you were cutting up real sandwiches into halves and quarters and then eating them. They looked delicious. I was really pleased to see how well you worked together in your playground project bid. You managed to get £5000, which is fantastic. Well done! This should go a long way to improving your playground.

Mrs Stewart and all the staff work very hard to make the school as good as it can be and I am confident that it will continue to improve. To help with this, I have asked them to ensure that you continue to improve your writing skills. You can help them by working hard, listening to their instructions and by finding ways to use your writing skills in lots of different subjects.

You are a credit to your mums and dads and carers. I can see why your teachers enjoy working with you every day. I wish you and your families all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.