

# St Bega's C of E Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112349
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	310862
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Penny Parrish

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	41
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Madonna Adams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jaqueline Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Longrigg Lane Eskdale Holmrook Holmrook CA19 1TW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 723259
<b>Fax number</b>	01946 723259

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a very small Church of England school, located in a rural village setting. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none has English as an additional language. Children start school in their Reception year with skills that are typical for their age. Although the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is relatively small, the proportion is higher than average. Very few pupils qualify for free school meals. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes.

In the past year, the school has achieved the Activemark award, Healthy School accreditation and the Investors in People Award. A private nursery school shares the school's facilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Bega's is a good school. Parents praise its work highly and are very confident of the success of the school in providing, as one parent put it, 'a well-rounded education from a committed staff in a very happy school.' The ethos of the school is lively and positive. Its small size enables a strong, supportive family atmosphere that is particularly successful in ensuring that pupils' personal development is of a high quality and that pupils are well cared for. The headteacher provides dynamic leadership and, with the close-knit staff team, a firm commitment to effective provision for all pupils.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good. The small cohorts mean that statistical comparison of results in national tests in Years 2 and 6 are unreliable without further information about the progress of individual pupils. However, the school's data show that standards in English, mathematics and science are currently broadly similar to the national average by Year 6. Standards are improving year-on-year through the school. Recent improvements in assessment systems, target setting and teaching arrangements have enabled great strides forward within reading and writing for most pupils over the past year. Although progress is at least satisfactory in mathematics, it is not as rapid as it has become in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well in both classes and, consequently, make good progress.

Excellent relationships and a curriculum of good quality ensure that pupils enjoy learning. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are confident and articulate, and show exceptionally good care and concern for others. Pupils clearly understand well the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet and frequent exercise. They share enthusiastically in local events, such as the village carnival, developing a strong sense of belonging to the local community. Pupils enjoy finding out about different places, faiths and cultures. Their exceptionally good social skills and increasingly good progress in the basic skills put them in a good position for the next stage of their education and future employment.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start school in the Reception year with skills that are typical of most four-year-olds nationally. Teaching is good and the curriculum well organised to promote all areas of learning well, and children's personal, social and emotional development especially well. Progress is good. Skilful teaching, guided by useful assessments and a good understanding of the needs of young children, ensures that their differing needs are met well although they work with pupils in Years 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, the staff and children were enjoying the facilities made available within a brand new extension. Links with a local nursery are good; the recently improved facilities are shared on a daily basis, fostering strong links between both year groups. Along with the induction of the newly appointed teaching assistant, more time is needed to embed the good start to the new school year.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their progress in mathematics to match that in English.
- Clarify success criteria within the school's development planning and monitoring activities to add rigour to an otherwise good system.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Standards are broadly average, although the very small cohorts each year make comparisons with national averages tenuous. Past difficulties with standardising assessment techniques through the school and staffing difficulties have left a legacy of underachievement in some year groups. This issue is now fully resolved but more time is needed before recent significant improvements in pupils' progress impact fully on standards by Year 6. Good, and sometimes excellent, progress in English is moving standards forward well. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory but improving. These subjects are targeted for further development within the school's development plan for this year. Discussions with pupils combined with evidence of their past work in information and communication technology (ICT) shows good progress over the past year and at least average standards, enabled by the school's new computer suite. Targets set for individual pupils are challenging, especially in English, generally achieved, and are helping to raise standards through the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and, when asked, choose a wide range of favourite subjects. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good. Spiritual development is supported well by good links with the local church, for example, and a good understanding of the Christian way of life. The school is justly proud of its supportive and friendly family atmosphere. Behaviour is excellent, as are the relationships between all in the school community. Pupils appear relaxed and confident, in lessons and around the school. The trust shown between pupils and with adults in school is sometimes inspirational as observed within the work in pairs, which included a relaxing head massage, within a lesson in personal, social and health education for pupils in the older class. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and know adults and other pupils will respond readily to any need for help. Pupils contribute well to the school community through, for example, acting as school councillors. Older pupils working as 'buddies' are very proud of their responsibilities for the newest pupils, and impress parents with their friendliness and good support. Attendance is broadly average, although the absence of some pupils due to family holidays during term-time tends to reflect heavily on percentages in this small school. Pupils' excellent personal development enhances their progress and, together with good progress in literacy and ICT especially, provides a very good basis for their future education and preparation for employment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Enthusiastic and lively teaching of good quality produces the good learning evident in lessons and most examples of pupils' past work for all age groups. Teachers have a good understanding of what needs to be taught, check pupils' progress well and set useful targets for future learning. Teachers make careful summaries of pupils' individual achievements and points for development, for example, when marking their work. These methods have worked particularly well to improve

pupils' writing, which, alongside improvements in teaching and learning in reading, have led to good gains in pupils' learning in English over the past year. Plans are rightly in hand to improve pupils' learning in mathematics and science through similar projects. Teachers are adventurous in piloting new systems, determined that they should work well but very willing to make adaptations if difficulties arise. The recent improvements in the provision for the Foundation Stage show these painstaking skills in action. Pupils with particular talents are helped to move forward through, for example, working with the older pupils. Those who need extra support are helped through the consistent and well planned support of teaching assistants. Although teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, occasional opportunities are missed by teachers to involve them in assessment tasks during whole-class lessons led by the teacher.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and enriched well by an interesting variety of activities. Pupils particularly enjoy, for example, learning French and working with a ceramics specialist to devise artwork to decorate the outside of the school. Teachers who specialise in subjects such as physical education enhance the skills of the permanent staff. The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal development. They gain a good understanding of other cultures, for example, through a good range of visits and visitors linked to other world faiths. The school joins readily with other local schools and national projects to enhance provision. The school has embarked on improvements in provision for mathematics, better investigations through greater discussions in science and more opportunities for creativity across the curriculum but more time is needed to extend and embed these projects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The excellent relationships throughout the school help pupils to feel protected and valued, and to learn with confidence. Staff provide good role models for their good personal development. Effective systems for child protection and other safeguarding are in place and used promptly where necessary. The school is very supportive to pupils on a personal level and goes to considerable trouble to ensure their safety and well-being. Improvements in systems for tracking and supporting pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities have led to the good involvement of other professionals in promoting their good progress. Clear records are kept of pupils' assessment data year-on-year, providing a clear picture of where extra help or challenge is needed. Improvements in the use of this data through carefully targeted teaching have led to impressive improvements in literacy. Pupils are well informed on their strengths and where they need to improve, and enjoy their involvement in promoting their own learning. There is more work to be done to extend the effectiveness of the system across all subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides a strong lead to the aims and development of the school. After a period of staffing difficulties, a very effective staff team has been established. Good systems for delegation, combined with the exceptional dedication of all staff and good self-evaluation

processes, have set in train a series of good improvements, some of which have yet to impact fully across all age groups and subjects. The headteacher's determination to fulfil the shared vision for the school leads to an impressive achievement of good leadership and management during her one-and-a-half days out of the classroom. Improvements are generally well researched and thought through, but the monitoring of outcomes for pupils sometimes lacks rigour. This is because markers for success are not always firmly rooted in clear targets to improve pupils' learning.

The work of the governing body has improved very well since the last inspection. Governors are now well informed and play a decisive role in the improvement of the school. Their partnership with the headteacher, staff and pupils is strong, with lots of examples of combined efforts, such as shared training and monitoring of the school's performance. The governors are particularly adept at fostering links with the local community, making the school a focus and extension of village life. Nonetheless, the governors are strongly motivated to prepare the pupils for 'life on the world stage', as described by the chair of governors, and not only for life in the village.

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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	3
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?	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	3
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 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	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

19 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Bega's C of E Primary School, Cumbria, CA19 1TW

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team so warmly to your school. It was a delight and a privilege for me to see how well you are doing. I was very pleased to see how beautifully you behave and look after each other. Many of your parents told me that your school is a very important and happy part of your lives and I think they are right.

The teachers and staff are very patient, kind and enthusiastic so it is not surprising that so many of you told me you liked being at school. I found that teaching is good and that you learn well. Everyone, staff and children, thinks hard about their targets and tries to do their best to achieve them. Lessons are very interesting and I know you enjoy them. You are lucky to have a good range of visits out of school to help you to learn more. Visitors to school seem to help you to learn a lot more about other places and people. The school council works well to improve the school in important ways. I was interested to see the exciting adventure trail outside, as well as the new ceramic artwork decorating the school's walls. Those foxes look really life-like! I enjoyed helping the children in Years 3 to 6 with their work on biographies, though I began to wish my life had been as exciting in some parts as that of John Lennon. I also began to wish that I could see the breathtaking views from your school through all the different seasons.

I know you have all worked extremely hard to improve your reading and writing, and I was impressed with the work that I saw. Since the new computer suite was fitted, your work has really stepped up in ICT, too. I have asked your headteacher and all the staff and governors to help you to become even better with mathematics. I know you will play your part well by doing your best. I have also suggested that the teachers and governors try to be really clear about what they want to help you get better at when they are working to improve your school. This will help them to decide how well things are working in your school.

I wish you and your teachers and governors well as you work to make your good school even better.

With very best wishes for the future

Mrs Penny Parrish

Lead inspector