

Waberthwaite CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112352
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310864
Inspection date	15 July 2008
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	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Ann Baker
Headteacher	Mrs Wilma Sharples
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	Waberthwaite Millom Cumbria LA19 5YJ
Telephone number	01229 717664
Fax number	01229 717150

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' progress across the school
- the provision for children in the Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve achievement and progress in writing
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in meeting pupils' needs and pupils' involvement in their own assessment.

Evidence was gathered from: observations of lessons; scrutiny of key documentation and parents' questionnaires; and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils, a governor and a parent. 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 assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school serving an isolated, rural area. 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 and almost all have English as their first language. The proportion of children identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies each year and is currently broadly average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

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 outstanding features. One parent's view, 'Waberthwaite C of E School has had a positive impact on both our children's learning abilities and their enthusiasm for learning', typifies the views of the vast majority. There is a strong family feel and the school is at the heart of the community. It extends a warm welcome to everyone who walks through the door. When pupils go on to secondary school, they are confident, mature, thoughtful young people with the essential academic and personal skills to do well in future.

Pupils reach above average standards in mathematics, science and reading and they can use computers well to support their learning. Standards in writing, whilst in line with national averages, could be better. Standards are also high in music with every pupil learning at least one instrument. Despite the small numbers, and limitations of accommodation, there is good participation in sport, which enables pupils to gain success and build their confidence. Given pupils' starting points on entry to school, which are broadly typical for their age, the above average standards by the end of Year 6 represent good achievement.

A significant factor contributing to the above average standards is the good quality of teaching which exists across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress from the moment they enter the school. Teaching is often characterised by lively questioning, stimulating debate and opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in different situations. Information and communication technology (ICT) effectively enhances teaching and also makes learning fun. An excellent partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that individual care is given for each pupil. As a result, those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are involved in all aspects of school life and make good progress alongside other pupils. Furthermore, there is a good curriculum which is generally well planned. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of key skills such as ICT through first hand practical experiences. Pupils are immersed in a wide variety of activities linked to the locality and the natural environment. Innovation in the form of the Forest School engages learners in the Reception and Key Stage 1 with nature and inspires their learning. An excellent range of educational visits to places as far afield as London and as near as Hawkshead enhances not only the pupils' academic skills and knowledge, but also their personal development. Not enough opportunities, however, are provided for pupils to write.

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They feel safe and secure and are happy and enthusiastic learners. Everyone works together in a caring, nurturing environment where friendship and respect for one another are the norm. As a consequence, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Pupils bounce into school in the morning, full of smiles and excitement for the day ahead. Their enjoyment of school is one reason why attendance is well above average. The efforts of the school to involve pupils in sport; for example, the 'Chance to Shine' cricket initiative, coupled with the provision of high quality school meals, demonstrate why pupils have an advanced knowledge and understanding of how to eat well and keep fit and healthy. Their knowledge of right and wrong is very good. Links with schools further afield; for example, in Pakistan and Rwanda, successfully broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures within a global society. Pupils' views are very much valued. They talk with pride about their contribution to improving the school, such as their involvement in building up the outdoor learning resources. The pupils' influence increasingly spreads beyond the immediate school

environment. Pupil representatives on the school council are petitioning to reduce the speed limit on the busy road adjacent to the school.

High standards of personal care and support for each individual reflect the strong Christian teaching that permeates the school. Staff ensure that pupils are safe and extremely well cared for. All required safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. Academic guidance is good because staff know each pupil's strengths and weaknesses. This good assessment assists teachers' planning so that individual needs are met. Despite the pupils' capacity to evaluate how well they are doing and how they can improve, strategies to enable them to do so are not advanced enough. This holds back some elements of pupils' progress, most notably in writing.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The infectious enthusiasm of the headteacher underpins the success of the school. It gives the school enormous vision and opens the eyes of pupils and staff to new ideas. The school is accurate in its own evaluation and sets suitably high academic targets for pupils' future success. The headteacher is supported by excellent administrative staff, who take much of the load off the headteacher's shoulders. The whole staff team have high expectations of themselves and the pupils although in the area of writing, stronger leadership is required. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection with significant improvements to the accommodation, resources and the curriculum. The effective support of governors and the strong commitment that exists amongst staff and parents gives the school a good capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is delivered in a safe and secure environment alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The children benefit from being educated with older pupils because they have good role models to follow. When children start school their levels of learning vary enormously, but overall they are broadly typical for their age. Good initiatives such as the Forest School inspire learning and, by the end of Reception, children have achieved well. Most reach levels of development that are above those typical for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, in their physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are articulate speakers and many develop a good knowledge and understanding of basic mathematics. All read well for their age but could do better in early writing. The staff carefully monitor children's progress and prompt them well to extend their skills and ideas through active play. Children really enjoy the wide variety of stimulating activities, such as working in the 'Waberthwaite café'. Links with parents are excellent and ensure their full involvement with their children's education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Increase the involvement of pupils in evaluating their own standards and in knowing their next steps in learning.

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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 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?	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	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

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	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

16 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waberthwaite CofE School, Cumbria LA19 5YJ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and sharing your thoughts. Your school is good and has some outstanding features. I was impressed by how well you behave and care for others and the enthusiasm you have for school. You do well in mathematics, science and reading. You also do well in music; your performance with the recorders, the flute, the guitars and the piano was very impressive. It is clear that you enjoy using computers to help you learn and you are fortunate to enjoy many opportunities to participate in sport. I have asked the school, however, to find ways to help you to do even better in your writing. You can help in this by working with your teachers in learning how to assess your own work so that you can know how to do even better.

Your teachers work very hard to give you a wide range of things beyond normal lessons. The trips to places such as London, Hawkshead and the Forest all make learning fun. You are also lucky to have such a good playground with lots of opportunities to play. I was amazed by the way two of you swept down the grassed slope whilst riding the 'rocket' and your tree is such a good resource: it reminded me of a dragon! Those of you who are play leaders do well to help others and I wish luck to the Copeland School Councillors with your quest.

Your school is well managed. Your headteacher works so hard to open your eyes to other worlds and places. The links with Rwanda and Pakistan exemplify this and it helps you to understand the world beyond Cumbria.

Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. They supported my judgement that the school is very caring and that the quality of teaching is good.

I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Dave Byrne

Lead inspector