

Heversham St Peter's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112416
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310885
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Jim Bennetts

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	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr John Thorley
Headteacher	Mrs Hazel Blakeley
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2003
School address	Leasgill Heversham Milnthorpe Cumbria LA7 7FG
Telephone number	015395 62514
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of learning in English and mathematics throughout the school; the efficiency of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; the balance of experiences provided by the curriculum and the progress that pupils make in Foundation Stage (their first year at school). Evidence was gathered from: the school's documentation; assessment systems and national test results; discussions with staff, governors, the local authority and a partner school; parents' and pupils' views, and lesson observations.

- Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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 in this report. On some points, there was sufficient inspection evidence to suggest that the school had been over cautious in its evaluation.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than the great majority of primary schools. About half the pupils come from the village of Heversham; others come from several surrounding villages. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. Most pupils come from professional households and live in comfortable circumstances. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally similar to that found nationally. Many of these pupils have well documented needs that call for substantial support beyond the classroom. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is usually small, but has varied from year to year. The school maintains strong links with the local church and wider community reflecting its distinctive ethos.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Heversham St Peter's C of E Primary is an outstanding school. It has made impressive improvement since the last inspection. It enjoys the vigorous support of most parents, and is highly effective in making the most of its partnership with others in education to maximise pupils' opportunities.

When children start at the school they generally show capabilities that are a little stronger than those that are typical for their age. They make good headway during their time in the Reception year and enter Year 1 with better competencies than are expected nationally. National assessments at age seven have shown above average standards for many years; in 2007 they were exceptionally high. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is very good and on an upward trend.

In national tests at age 11, standards in English, mathematics and science have been exceptionally high for several years. In 2007, most pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics and science and all reached the level expected nationally. Some pupils had specific learning difficulties relating to reading and writing and made slow progress in English. Achievement is outstanding in Key Stage 2. Several lessons were seen in Key Stage 2; in most, pupils' progress was excellent. During their time in school, pupils' development is impressive across a wide range of academic and personal skills.

Behaviour is excellent. Attendance is very high. Pupils are confident and personable. They engaged with enthusiasm and commitment in an assembly to celebrate the coming of Christmas, and took part with equal eagerness in the joyful social occasion of Christmas lunch. Pupils' social development and spiritual awareness are strengths of the school. Pupils enjoy their schooling greatly and are admirably prepared for life that follows. All aspects of pupils' personal development are commendable, and generally excellent.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Some excellent lessons were seen. They were ambitious and rigorously planned. Teachers' enthusiasm was contagious. Classrooms throbbed with vibrant activity. Year 5 developed imaginative 'Jack and the Beanstalk' plays in English, whilst Year 6 tackled the job with splendid enthusiasm in French. Older pupils talked and wrote about their mathematics with confidence. Year 3 and 4 pupils evaluated one another's writing and suggested improvements. Girls in Years 3 and 4 practised a physical education routine with precision, presented it with self-confidence and appreciated the constructive criticism of their peers. Pupils have a wide, rich and imaginative curriculum in lessons and beyond. Teachers are well supported by the high quality work of teaching assistants. Occasionally in lessons, a few pupils do not move on with sufficient urgency because adults are busy with others, and on a few occasions a point is laboured too long in whole class teaching where just one or two are struggling to grasp it.

Pupils are cherished warmly; all are well known to staff. The school takes appropriate measures with regard to health and safety and strikes the right balance in giving pupils the chance to learn by taking some responsibility for their own welfare. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are now identified at an early stage and receive painstaking and highly effective support. Their difficulties and the support given are meticulously documented. All pupils' progress is monitored closely and demanding targets are set.

The headteacher and those with key responsibilities in school are accomplished in keeping track of how well things are going, and giving a steer that congratulates success and motivates further endeavour. Senior staff are resourceful in identifying opportunities – including a range of

funding that can be available – and putting them to best advantage. The school gives excellent value for money. Nothing but the best will do. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and candid, but sometimes too modest. The great majority of parents are fulsome in their praise of the school. A number express uncertainty about why things are done as they are with, for example, concerns about levels of supervision and safety, arrangements for young children at the start of the day, and how classes are covered when the usual teacher is away. Such matters are actually dealt with well by the school, but it would be helpful if parents had a clearer understanding of why various arrangements are made. Governors are highly supportive and know the school well. They are thorough in their procedures, lend valuable professional skill and give generously of their time. The school has excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children generally start the Reception year with skills and capabilities that are a little above those that are typical for their ages. There is variation in strengths and weaknesses from year to year. The school is careful in its assessment of needs and caters for children accordingly. Children make good progress in Reception and are generally in a strong position to start Year 1. They surpass their targets for understanding and most exceed targets for social and physical development.

Progress in this stage of education has improved considerably since the last inspection. There has been firm action to secure good quality provision. Work for the class that comprises Reception and Year 1 children is well planned, and the younger ones have good opportunities to develop initiative and self-reliance through suitably managed play activities as well as learning the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. Children make themselves at home in the role play corner and the outdoor chalet. They develop manual skills and awareness of, for example, the properties of damp and dry sand and ways of describing them. They relish outdoor play and social interaction and all look forward with eagerness to the refurbishment of the classroom, which will shortly be put in hand.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in every lesson all groups of pupils work with the urgent pace that is typical of the school's best lessons.
- Help all parents to understand why things are done as they are in the school.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heversham St Peter's C of E Primary School, Cumbria, LA7 7FG

Thank you for all your help when I came to your school. I really enjoyed my visit, and talking to you in classrooms, in the Year 6 discussion group, and up in the 'Forest'.

Your school is outstanding. Standards are very high and you make excellent progress. You enjoy well planned, interesting and sometimes exciting lessons. The school provides a wonderful range of opportunities in lessons and through other activities. All the adults look after you really well and are keen for you all to succeed. It is not surprising that you are so confident and grown up in the way you go about, look after yourselves and work with one another. The school is very well run by the headteacher and governors.

I have asked the school to make things even better in just two ways.

- Though most parents are really enthusiastic about what the school does, a few have little worries about why things are done the way they are. They wonder about the 'self-registration' in Reception and about whether you are safe in the playground. Things like this are fine really. The school may need to explain them more to your parents – and you could help by explaining them at home as well.
- I saw some excellent lessons. Now and again, when adults were busy with other groups, a few of you – particularly younger girls and boys – did not make as much headway as you usually do. You can help your teachers by making sure you are always getting on as fast as you can when you are working by yourselves.

You should be really proud to be at such an excellent school. Much of its success is due to your positive attitudes and eagerness to do well. Congratulations, and do all you can to keep the school outstanding.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

School Inspector