

Furness Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112648
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310964
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Gill Broadbent

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nicola Dinsdale
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Ward
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Buxton Road Furness Vale High Peak Derbyshire SK23 7PQ
Telephone number	01663 744103
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is well above average. The school's many awards include a third Basic Skills Quality Award, a Health Promoting School Award and the Derbyshire Anti-bullying Award of Excellence. The school has strong links with the local cluster of schools and support agencies. The 'Spaced Out' garden has been developed with the support of a local astronomer and the community.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether all pupils achieve as well as they can especially in English, whether checks on pupils learning are rigorous, accurate, effective, and how well the school's leaders and managers use self evaluation to bring about school improvement. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff and representatives of the governors and local authority. In addition, there was observation of parts of several lessons, analysis of school information and its self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work, parent questionnaires and discussions with pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school and, because of its considerable success, it is greatly appreciated by parents. Pupils make excellent progress no matter what their individual starting points or learning needs happen to be. The opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress are exemplary.

The school's success is due to the headteacher's strong direction. The school has clear aims and these have the full support of parents and the community. In all, this sets high expectations and these are shared by all staff and governors. The school is a lively and stimulating place in which pupils are really challenged to do their best. They love coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. The highly effective teamwork of staff and their determination ensures that the school is very well adapted to the needs of each pupil. Their task is made no easier by the very variable numbers of pupils in each year, ranging from five to 15. In addition, pupils' attainment on entry varies widely and many have a learning difficulty or disability. Nevertheless, by the time pupils are ready to leave standards are above average, overall.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. They are totally opposed to bullying, which the anti-bullying award acknowledges. Pupils say that if bullying should happen it is stopped quickly. Their spiritual, social moral and cultural development is outstanding. As a result of the many opportunities to learn about peoples from across the world, pupils appreciate and respect the different customs, beliefs and traditions of other cultures. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to school improvement through, for example, helping the school to achieve the Health Promoting School Award. They sought the support of parents for their healthy lunchbox project. They checked lunchboxes, thanked parents for their help, and explained what still needs to be improved. The fresh fruit pupils sell in the playground is very popular and encourages healthy eating too. There is a good take up of the sports activities on offer, which helps pupils to stay fit. Pupils' show very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe especially on the stairs, in the playground or when using the nearby road and railway. A combination of good literacy and numeracy skills, excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills and personal skills, especially in teamwork, prepares pupils exceptionally well for the future.

Teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers inspire confidence in pupils by their clear explanations and patient discussions. Lessons are challenging and carefully planned based on accurate assessments of what each pupil has already learnt and what they need to do next. Work is adapted well to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils. This is ably supported by additional activities organised within the local cluster of schools. Excellent links with support agencies, adaptations to the building and high quality help given by teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others. All pupils are confident, work hard and have positive attitudes to learning. An outstanding curriculum, which includes teaching French, also provides many practical opportunities to make learning active and fun. The 'Spaced Out' garden community and school project succeeds in helping pupils learn about the natural world, astronomy and growing crops to bake bread. Furthermore, opportunities for pupils to use their ICT, literacy and numeracy skills are numerous. Visits to Bolsover Castle and visitors, such as the African Ark group, lead to pupils producing high quality artwork and music. A very effective personal, social, health education and citizenship programme contributes greatly towards pupils' excellent personal skills. Pupils really appreciate the choice

of clubs and team games, as well as the brass band and choir, which all encourage everyone's interests and talents. The pastoral care, support and guidance for pupils are outstanding. Excellent links with other agencies, partners and schools ensures that the school has access to a very wide range of support and guidance in helping it meet pupils' needs.

Exceptional leadership and management is ensuring the school has an outstanding capacity for improvement. Teachers combine their expertise most effectively and make an excellent contribution to the school's evaluation of its work. A systematic and rigorous approach to monitoring the school's work ensures everyone develops an accurate view of strengths and the areas for improvement. The new governing body is active in fulfilling all of its responsibilities. Governors have sought out relevant training, established their roles quickly and in many respects, they are challenging the school well. They have some effective systems for supporting the school, for example in ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils, including all the requirements for safeguarding pupils. However, their role in monitoring the school's effectiveness is still quite limited, largely because they are such new governors.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Foundation Stage progress exceptionally well. The eleven children in Reception Year are extremely well taught alongside a similar number of Year 1 pupils. Before they begin Reception year, there are excellent arrangements for staff to visit children in their other settings and a programme of visits by the children to school. Parents who use the weekly toddler group say it is like being a part of a family. Consequently, children settle very quickly into the happy, warm and stimulating Foundation Stage with staff who know them and their families well. While children start Reception year with standards below those expected for their age, they thrive on work and activities that are planned on accurate assessments of their needs. Outstanding teaching and curriculum together with well-balanced adult led and child-initiated tasks ensures that most children reach the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the monitoring role of governors so that they can contribute effectively to school self-evaluation.

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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?	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

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Furness Vale Primary School, Derbyshire SK23 7PQ

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you some of the important things that I found.

Your school is outstanding. All of the staff work well together as a team to make sure that you all do as well as you can. Your teachers help you make exceptional progress by planning work and activities that challenge each of you really well. I thought school activities were very exciting and enjoyable for you, and this is helping you to learn. So, I'm not surprised that your attendance is so good. You were right when you said that your teachers are always patient and explain things you don't understand until you eventually 'get it'. As a result, you work hard, have excellent attitudes to learning and your behaviour is exemplary. I saw you being very kind to each other and I am glad you know any bullying will be stopped quickly. I was thrilled to hear how much you enjoyed your visit to Bolsover Castle and the visitors who come to the school. I think the 'Spaced Out' garden is a great project and I know everyone enjoys and learns from it.

The headteacher and staff do an excellent job and are always looking for ways that they can make your school even better. You help too by encouraging everyone to eat healthy packed lunches and fruit at playtime.

I have asked the new school governors to help too, by checking on how well the school is doing so that they can contribute even more to school improvement.

I hope that you continue to help your school improve and enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gill Broadbent

Lead inspector