

Longtown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133387
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	316107
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Shearsmith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Harrison
Headteacher	Mr David Ratcliff
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	Mary Street Longtown Carlisle Cumbria CA6 5UG
Telephone number	01228 791203
Fax number	01228 792578

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Inspection number	316107

© Crown copyright 2007

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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Longtown Primary School is a smaller than average size primary school situated within a small market town. Most pupils are of White British heritage and come from the immediate area; however the remainder come from a number of small outlying rural communities. A below average proportion of the pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. The percentage identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but rising. The school has the Sports Active and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the pupils' achievement and standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average because too many pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable. From starting points which are below that normally expected for their age, the children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, to reach standards by the end of Year 2 which are broadly average. The school's test results show a history of underachievement at Key Stage 2. Although pupils at this key stage are currently making satisfactory progress, the many improvements made to the quality of education have not had time to make a sufficient impact on standards. The underachievement in Key Stage 2 is not being eradicated quickly enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the effective individual support they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school has successfully worked on the pastoral side of the pupils' development and this is also recognised by parents. Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is satisfactory following a period when it was below the national average. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is particularly strong through effective links with a school which has a high number of pupils from minority ethnic communities. Pupils generally behave well and have good relationships with each other and adults. They have a good knowledge of the world of work, but, by the end of Year 6 not all have the skills necessary to become successful future learners.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, reflecting recent improvements to the planning and assessment systems. The most effective provides a good level of challenge for all pupils and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the lessons. However, there is not enough teaching of a good or better quality to close the gaps left by previous underachievement and to ensure that learning is built upon year by year. At Key Stage 2, assessment is not always used well to plan lessons that provide the right amount of challenge for all learners. Throughout the school, there are good examples of marking which show pupils how to improve, but this is not embedded in practice.

The curriculum is satisfactory and supports the pupils' personal development well. Adaptations to provide a wider range of opportunities for writing are beginning to show in the pupils' improved progress. A good range of enrichment activities contribute well to the pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils receive good pastoral support and guidance but academic guidance is, as yet, ineffective. New systems in place to track pupils' progress and set targets for learning are not well enough established to have made an impact, especially at Key Stage 2.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The successes in promoting the pupils' personal development provide a secure foundation for the academic improvements which are needed. This has already been recognised by the newly formed leadership team which, with support from the local authority, is taking more effective actions to raise standards. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and there is a systematic approach to improvement. Senior leaders are checking the effectiveness of improvement plans, but not enough attention is given to the

impact of actions on the pupils' learning. Value for money is inadequate because achievement is not good enough for a significant proportion of pupils. However, pupils are beginning to make better progress because of the current developments, demonstrating that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Foundation Stage unit with levels of skills which are usually below expectations for their age. They settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery, develop self-confidence and become increasingly independent. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, but some is good so children make at least satisfactory progress. Currently, most children are meeting the nationally expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. They make better progress in the Nursery where teaching is more effective. Throughout the unit, there is a wide range of well-focused activities to promote learning, though there is limited access to outdoor provision. In addition, there are sometimes not enough child-initiated activities in the Reception class. The overall quality of the children's experiences provides a satisfactory foundation for their future learning. The Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and links with parents are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure assessment procedures are used consistently and effectively so that teaching provides challenge for all pupils and, in particular, it increases the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure that improvements quickly become embedded in practice and that checks on their effectiveness are focused on the impact on pupils' learning.
- Implement the best marking practice so that all pupils know what they must do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. The progress made in Key Stage 2 has not built effectively on what has been achieved in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are lower than they should be.

From starting points which are below that normally expected for their age, the majority of children reach the expected levels of development by the end of the Reception year. Standards are broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. The results of the 2007 assessments declined from the previous year to below average, but this was due to the lower range of ability of the particular cohort. Given the starting points of the pupils in this particular year group, their achievement was satisfactory. The results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have been significantly below average for the past five years. They reflect a history of inadequate progress and underachievement. Although pupils are now making satisfactory progress, it is not enough to close the gaps in their learning or ensure that they reach the standards, especially in English and mathematics, of which they are capable. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, with some good individual support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school has successfully worked on the pastoral side of the pupils' development and this is also acknowledged by parents who are very supportive.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school telling inspectors that, 'The teachers are always there to help you'. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle: there is good participation in sporting activities and support for the healthy tuck shop. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, which is reflected in their behaviour in and around school. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and take a key role in decision-making through the school council. They take their responsibilities for looking after younger children very seriously and, as play leaders, enjoy teaching them games. Pupils enjoy school and they generally behave well and have good relationships with each other and adults. They collaborate well and help each other in lessons. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils show a good understanding about the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. For example, they have raised money for a children's hospice. Cultural development is particularly strong. The school is rightly proud of its links with a school which has a high number of pupils from minority ethnic communities to help extend pupils' awareness of different cultures.

The pupils have developed a good knowledge of the world of work through visiting speakers from local industries including airline staff. However, because standards in English and mathematics are not high enough not all pupils acquire the skills necessary to become successful future learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is improving which is clearly demonstrated by the increasing rate of pupils' progress. Typically, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so lessons run smoothly. Staff know the pupils very well and the level of care shown for their personal needs is good. Lessons are pitched at the right level for pupils in Key Stage 1, but in some lessons in Key Stage 2, the work is not sufficiently challenging to rectify the underachievement. This is because assessment information is beginning to inform lesson planning, but it is not yet embedded in practice across the school. Question and answer sessions in particular are not always geared well enough to meet the wide range of abilities in the class. Teaching assistants provide valuable support. A new marking system has been introduced but it has not been in use long enough to be truly effective in ensuring, for example, that pupils' work is presented well and that pupils know how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall although it makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are just developing: the impact, however, is becoming evident in writing. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory with good features. The school makes very good use of social

and emotional teaching materials to promote pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education successfully. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. Sporting activities, including those organised by visiting sport coaches add greatly to the quality of overall curriculum provision. Educational visits play an important part in extending the curriculum beyond school including residential visits. Special events such as multicultural week and industry week add to pupils' curricular experiences very well. There are good links with local businesses including sponsorship of the school's breakfast club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral support. Child protection requirements and procedures are clear and understood by all staff. Health and safety procedures are properly underpinned by risk assessments, enabling pupils to undertake activities safely both on and off school, premises. A high emphasis is placed on pupils' personal care by all members of staff. Statutory requirements to safeguard pupils are in place. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, especially from teaching assistants. The school is starting to include pupils more in their learning by setting targets, but it is too early to judge the impact on standards and teachers do not refer to them enough in marking. As a result, pupils are not always clear how to check their own progress. Systems for tracking pupils' progress through regular assessments are not yet fully effective so, although their progress is tracked, the information is not consistently used to ensure pupils are making good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management team is focused on raising standards and there are signs of improvement. With the support of the local authority, systems have been put in place that are leading to better progress for the pupils. Through its own evaluation of the school's provision, the senior leadership team has a clear view of what needs to be improved and is taking a systematic approach to implement improvements. However, systems to check the effectiveness of actions are not always applied with urgency or focus sufficiently on outcomes for the pupils. New assessment procedures are effective when consistently applied and when the information from them is applied to the teaching. Subject leaders are developing their roles and gaining a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas but do not yet rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of any actions taken to improve standards. The targets set this year are challenging and the school's own tracking and assessment of progress indicate that they are achievable. The governing body has recently reviewed its committee structure and has a sound understanding of its roles and responsibilities to monitor and influence the school's performance. Although improvement since the last inspection is inadequate, the school is beginning to move in the right direction.

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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

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

Age group

3–11

Inspection date(s)

27–28 November 2007

Inspection number

316107

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of
the inspection.

29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longtown Primary School, Cumbria,

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say about your school.

The school makes sure you are safe and all the staff are really helpful when problems arise. You all work and play well together and it was good to see the older pupils teaching games to the younger ones. Attendance is much better so well done for coming to school regularly. It makes a difference!

However, standards are not as high as they should be by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, especially English and mathematics and so we have said that the school needs support to help it to improve. This is why the report says that your school has been given a 'Notice to Improve'. This will mean that inspectors will visit the school again within the next year to see if things have improved.

We have asked your school to:

- Improve your rate of progress, especially at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics so that you reach higher standards.
- Keep checking that you are all making the progress you should.
- Provide you with clear guidance on how to improve your work.

Most of all we want you to really try your best at all times and continue to enjoy all the opportunities that your school offers you.

Good luck and very best wishes for your future.

David Shearsmith

(Lead inspector)