

Pennine Way Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131177
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	323199
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	279
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Johnston
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Blair
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Silverdale Road Harraby Carlisle Cumbria CA1 3RQ
Telephone number	01228 607518
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

When it was inspected in October 2007, Pennine Way Primary School was given a notice to improve, and asked to address issues relating to pupils' standards and achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, and attendance. It was subsequently visited in April 2008, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average school serves an area of some social and economic disadvantage to the east of Carlisle city centre. It has an integrated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage is very low, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Pennine Way Primary is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. It has key strengths in: the determined and clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher; the good EYFS provision which gets children off to flying start; and the personal development of pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The experienced headteacher has skilfully overseen the implementation of initiatives to improve significantly the quality of writing, and to improve attendance to the national average. By rigorously monitoring and evaluating work in the classroom, she has ensured that teaching has improved, and now leads to satisfactory or better learning. From starting in Year 1 with broadly average standards pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science to reach the level expected for their age by the time they leave. Newly appointed and enthusiastic middle leaders, including subject coordinators, are learning their roles and have yet to exercise full accountability and responsibility in their designated areas of work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils settle quickly into the warm, inclusive and caring environment the school provides. They are typically polite, friendly and smiling. They speak with affection about the adults in the school, and they quickly adopt the calm and respectful manner they see the adults role modelling. Many pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help their friends and others in a range of ways including the school council, in charitable fundraising, as 'buddies', or as monitors around the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best lessons give pupils many opportunities to think for themselves. Expert questioning requires that pupils give explanations for their answers. In other lessons, work is not planned in sufficient detail to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met. In particular, higher attaining pupils are not stretched to think beyond the limits of what they already know and can do and these pupils do not make enough progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has strengths in securing pupils' good progress in writing throughout the school, and in language development, particularly in the EYFS and Key Stage 1. The school has necessarily focused recently on improving pupils' basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). However, the curriculum does not link subjects together well enough for pupils to extend and apply what they have already learned across different subjects to accelerate their progress further.

The school takes its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils very seriously. Staff know their pupils well and take great pains to support them when they need help. The school's assessment system gathers accurate and reliable information about what pupils have learned every half term. This information is not yet used well enough to ensure that pupils of all abilities are set work appropriate to their needs.

The school gives satisfactory value for money. Having made good progress in quickly addressing all four areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, the school has good capacity to secure further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in language and personal development. By the time they move into Year 1, standards are broadly average. Most make good progress in all of the areas of learning because provision is good. Teamwork is strongly promoted in the way staff plan together for the children's development, assess their progress and set challenging targets.

The recently appointed, but experienced, EYFS coordinator has ensured that staff have high aspirations for the children. As a consequence, the individual needs of the children are closely met. Parents are pleased with the good start their children make and typically say that 'children love the school' and 'have made remarkable progress'. Parents are reassured by the very good induction process which ensures that children settle quickly and happily into a colourful and interesting learning environment. Excellent attention is given to children's welfare. Indoor provision is used very well and provides a good balance of activities that are either led by adults or chosen by the children themselves. The outdoor area is still being developed and although it is satisfactory, it lacks the stimulus and excitement of indoors. Good teaching, an exciting curriculum and a good structure for the day help the children to make good progress in their personal development, well-being and in their academic learning. They develop independence, share equipment sensibly and behave well. They are particularly enthusiastic about their learning and achievements in role play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of information on pupils' performance when planning lessons so that higher attaining pupils are challenged more in English, mathematics and science.
- Sharpen up recent developments in the curriculum so that pupils can exploit and develop skills learned in one subject when working in another.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the progress made by pupils in their subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 have been steadily rising from significantly below average to in 2008 being broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence and the unvalidated results of 2008 national tests show that by the end of Year 6 standards were average overall. Most pupils made satisfactory progress, although not all of the higher attaining pupils made enough progress to reach the higher levels in the national tests (Level 5) in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, these results are the best the school has reached for many years. The school's reliable tracking system shows that in some subjects, for example, in mathematics and writing, pupils make good progress. However, this progress has yet to be sustained over time, and reflected in higher standards overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to their peers because of the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good because of the very strong emphasis the school places on fairness and respect for every individual. Cultural development is satisfactory because pupils' awareness of the range of different cultures in the wider world is more limited. Attendance has improved and is now at the national average. Pupils' behaviour is good, and they feel they are treated fairly and their views are heard. Their good attitudes to learning are shown in the way they keenly answer questions in class and their engagement during independent work. They enjoy school and are keen to learn, saying their teachers are 'really helpful' and 'learning is fun'. Pupils say bullying and racist incidents are rare, and they feel safe in school. They know how to lead a healthy life by choosing a well-balanced meal and taking plenty of exercise. The school hosts a well-attended, healthy breakfast club sponsored by a national bakery. The school council is effective and has helped to make several changes to the school, including new equipment for the playground. Pupils take on additional responsibilities through running a school tuck shop and serving salads at lunchtime. They are also involved in interviews when new staff are appointed. There are good and improving links with the local community. The school has recently established a link with a multicultural school in London to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures within the United Kingdom. The recent rise in standards means that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All staff have good rapport with pupils, manage behaviour well and so provide a positive atmosphere for learning. Many lessons are well structured with thoughtful sequences of activities focusing on key skills. This enables pupils to learn well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were required to imagine they were Samuel Pepys writing his diary about the Great Fire of London. This demanding but stimulating topic encouraged pupils to think for themselves, and led to full concentration and swift learning. In other lessons, the use of resources lacks imagination, and the range of activities is narrow. This is because teachers' planning does not make the best use of information the school holds about what pupils have already learned. Work set does not always challenge higher attaining pupils sufficiently, and these pupils could make better progress. Pupils' work is marked consistently well, often pinpointing sharply what they need to do to improve. The expertise displayed by well-informed teaching assistants is used effectively in supporting those pupils who find learning difficult for different reasons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It is considerably enhanced by the 'Smart Clubs' which run every Monday afternoon and have successfully tackled the weakness in attendance on the first day of the week. The wide range of activities is focused, purposeful and exciting. It covers, for example, nature studies, drama sessions and visits to homes for the elderly. The wide range of activities on offer promotes a broad spectrum of learning opportunities. Evaluations of the scheme show that pupils particularly enjoy the activities which are practically based and where they learn new skills.

The school's emphasis on developing basic skills, particularly literacy and numeracy, is beginning to impact on achievement in English and mathematics. Equality of opportunity is good. Although more able pupils can make better progress the great majority of pupils have full access to a curriculum that enables them to overcome many barriers to their learning and reach average standards. Having acknowledged the need for developments in its overall curriculum provision, the school is devising a broader, more creative and inclusive curriculum. However, at present, provision is in a state of change and has yet to be fully organised in a way which creates the most effective links between subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall, with some significant strengths. All aspects of safeguarding meet current requirements. Curriculum time is allocated for 'Kidsafe' to cover matters like internet safety and child protection. Staff know pupils well and are acutely aware of their pastoral needs. The highly skilled learning mentor, supported by equally skilled learning support assistants, is particularly effective in building relationships and breaking down the barriers to learning. The school has established effective partnerships with parents through detailed information about their children's progress. This has enabled the school to work closely with the local community and has led to an improvement in attendance. There are close and fruitful links with professional and other agencies to support, when required, vulnerable pupils and families.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Class teachers monitor progress well with 'Passports-Pathway to Success' which are weekly reviews of individual progress. However, teachers do not fully exploit all the information available to plan and set work to meet the learning needs of all pupils well enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The very effective headteacher has successfully drawn the staff together in sharing a common purpose. Everyone in the school is focused on helping pupils to learn, and to develop as effective members of society. The school has recently appointed new key stage leaders and subject coordinators. They have made a good start and share the headteacher's focus on raising standards. Subject coordinators recognise that they do not yet have sufficient influence over the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate, if modest in some areas, because the headteacher checks regularly and closely on the progress pupils are making. The school makes satisfactory provision for community cohesion, and has recently begun to forge links with schools in London. These have yet to be exploited to best advantage. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas it needs to work on. Its members are beginning to question the school about its results more closely. The school has worked diligently and successfully to address the issues identified for improvement at the last inspection.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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?	No

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pennine Way Primary School, Cumbria, CA1 3RQ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we visited your school recently. We were really impressed with your good manners, and the patient way in which you relate to each other. I was really delighted when some Year 2 pupils took the time over lunch to teach me to say 'Good afternoon' in sign language!

We found that Pennine Way Primary is a satisfactory and improving school, which is no longer required to make significant improvements, and which has these clear strengths:

- the really good leadership of the headteacher, who is making sure that the school is getting better
- the good provision in Nursery and Reception classes which helps you make such a good start to your learning
- the impressive way in which you develop as young people.

We feel that the school could do even better, so we have asked the headteacher and other leaders in the school to:

- ensure that lessons are planned more clearly so that all of you, but particularly those who find learning easier, are challenged to make better progress, and reach higher standards, in English, mathematics and science
- improve how lessons are linked together so that the skills and knowledge you learn in one subject can be used and developed further in a different subject
- give greater responsibility to those teachers who lead subjects for checking the learning that goes on in other classrooms.

You can help with these improvements by continuing to come to school as often as you do now, and by remaining the happy and smiling young people you already are.

Good luck to you all for the future.

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector