

Cumwhinton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112108
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325530
Inspection date	7 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Carole Cressey

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	119
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 Richard Ingham
Headteacher	Mrs Edith Graham
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Cumwhinton Carlisle Cumbria CA4 8DU
Telephone number	01228 560400
Fax number	01228 562824

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	7 November 2008
Inspection number	325530

© Crown copyright 2008

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

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- are the present uncertainties about staffing impacting on the quality of education for pupils, their achievement, progress and standards?
- are leadership and management at all levels sufficiently robust in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and implementing those strategies that will move the school forward?

Evidence was gathered from: the school's own assessment data and other school documentation; observations of teaching and learning; observations of pupils' interactions and responses; parents' questionnaires; and discussions with staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspectors found that the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation form were justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school serves the village of Cumwhinton and the surrounding rural community with some pupils travelling to the school from the town of Carlisle. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in a combined Reception and Year 1 class. Pupils come from a mixture of socio-economic backgrounds and most are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. The school provides specialist teaching for pupils with autism. The school premises are used for an after-school club and a summer school club. These clubs are not managed by the school. There has been a period of disruption to staffing recently and currently there is also an acting headteacher in post.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cumwhinton School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The majority of parents believe their children are well cared for, enjoy coming to school and make good progress. Inspectors agree that the school provides a well-ordered, safe and happy environment. Pupils are confident, well behaved and enthusiastic learners. Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory.

Following a recent period of disruption to staffing, the governors have responded to parental concerns and, working with the local authority, have put in place a range of effective measures to stabilise staffing and improve management. As a consequence, leaders at all levels are taking decisive action to improve the school's understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and are providing clear direction and support to the strongly motivated team. However, systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are not yet as rigorous as they could be.

The latest 2008 provisional national test results for 11 year olds show that the majority of pupils reached the expected level in English, mathematics and science and almost half reached the higher levels in mathematics and science. Standards in reading were especially high with almost every pupil reaching the expected level and well over half reaching the higher levels. Standards in writing were not as high and were well below those expected for pupils' ages and abilities. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good support they receive, and as a result they often reach the expected levels for their ages.

Although progress is satisfactory overall it is better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils could do even better, especially in writing. The school's targets are not sufficiently challenging given the consistently above average standards reached at the end of Year 2. Progress is most variable in Key Stage 2 because of inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching, the effectiveness of class assessment systems and the use of challenging targets. The school is aware of these inconsistencies and is beginning to take action to make improvements.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and set challenging work based securely on their knowledge of pupils' attainment. As a result, lessons are a hive of activity where pupils are confident, independent and successful learners. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so that they are able to take a full part in the lessons and make good progress. However, in some lessons planning does not always meet the needs of individual learners. There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the guidance pupils receive to help them improve their work and move on to the next steps in their learning. Sometimes, pupils are unclear about the purpose of their targets. The school is successful in teaching the basic skills of grammar and punctuation, and this is evident in pupils' books and is reflected in their homework. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have a positive approach to learning which is reflected in their good attendance. They report that they feel safe and secure in school and know that teachers will sort out their problems. They are proud to be members of a very effective school council which played an important role in planning the new Autistic Centre. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, including physical

activities like archery and tennis. Helping younger pupils at lunchtime, raising money to support local charities and sending clothes and toys to children who are the victims of natural disasters are developing pupils' awareness of what it means to be responsible citizens of their school, local and world community. The good range of enrichment activities adds significantly to pupils' levels of confidence, self-esteem, maturity and enjoyment. In addition, the emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) ensures that pupils are being well prepared for life ahead.

The care of pupils is good. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are in line with statutory requirements. Staff are very supportive of pupils who come to school with complex learning difficulties and this is greatly valued by the parents and carers of these pupils. They are delighted with the ease with which their children settle into school, the good progress they make toward their targets and the way they are able to take a full part in all the school has to offer. The whole school, including all parents as well as pupils, have recently celebrated the opening of the Autistic Centre which will serve the local area. This reflects the school's long-standing and highly regarded commitment to including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the life of the school.

The acting headteacher's leadership is having a positive impact on improving the quality of education. Following her review of the school's work, and with overwhelming support from staff, governors and the local authority, the school has begun to determine strategies to improve the provision and ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can and reach even higher standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has done well to maintain a happy, caring and successful learning environment for its pupils during turbulent times. The acting leadership has the confidence of the parents and staff, and improvements are already evident. Because of this, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The majority of children start in the combined Reception and Year 1 class with levels of development that are typical for their ages. They make satisfactory progress and the majority achieve the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year. Teaching is satisfactory. Staff interact well with the children and show good levels of care. Good relationships encourage positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. As a result, children quickly settle into routines and enjoy taking part in their activities. For example, during the inspection they were working enthusiastically with their 'talk partners' to reinforce the learning of new sounds. The indoor and outdoor environments support and extend children's spontaneous play and promote their personal and social development well. Literacy and numeracy are taught appropriately with a clear emphasis on daily learning of basic skills. However, the tasks to promote these skills are not always sufficiently challenging for more able children because the assessments do not inform the planning. As a result, learning activities for this particular group of children do not build on what they already know. Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory, and opportunities for staff to be involved in self-evaluation and improvement are developing. The school meets the statutory EYFS welfare requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing pupils with more opportunities to write in other subjects.
- Ensure systems are in place to rigorously monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

- Use assessment systems more rigorously to track pupils' progress and plan the next steps in learning.
- Improve the consistency of marking so that pupils know how to improve their work and understand their targets.

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.

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?	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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	2

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	2
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	2

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 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**

10 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cumwhinton School, Cumbria, CA4 8DU

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school a short while ago. We really enjoyed talking to you, especially the school council. We were very pleased to see how well behaved you are and how much you enjoy school and your learning.

You go to a school that provides you with a satisfactory education. Your school is making sure that you are all being well prepared to be responsible and caring citizens. You should be proud of all the things you do in helping to make your school and world a much better place. You know the importance of eating sensible food and taking lots of exercise. Do keep that up because it is so important to staying healthy and fit. The school takes good care of you and you say you feel safe in school and that your teachers are always there to sort out your problems.

We could see by the work in your books and displays around the school that most of you are reaching the expected levels in reading, maths and science. We think you could do even better. So, in order to help you do just that we have asked your school to:

- make sure that your progress is assessed and analysed closely so that the next steps in learning can be planned
- look more closely at how well all your lessons are going and how well you are doing so that it is clear what needs to be done next to help you to do your best
- raise standards in writing by providing you with more opportunities to write in other subjects
- give you more help to improve your work and to understand your targets.

So do listen carefully when your teachers talk to you or write comments in your books. We hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Carole Cressey Lead inspector

Mary Sewell Additional inspector