

South Walney Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112212
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325556
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	183
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	Rev John Hodgkinson
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Wray
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Amphitrite Street Walney Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 3BZ

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school located on Walney Island near the centre of Barrow. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin and there are none whose first language is not English. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than the national average, although this varies considerably between year groups. The percentage eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has Eco status and holds the Healthy Schools award. It is part of the School Sports Coordinator programme and has award winning outdoor learning areas.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which pupils clearly enjoy coming to. Pupils make good progress as a result of the good teaching, curriculum and care, guidance and support they receive. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. Parents are unanimous in their support for the way the school is led and managed and one typically commented that, 'The school is a delightful place, with a warm and friendly atmosphere for children to grow and develop in.'

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below that expected for their age. They make good progress but start Key Stage 1 still below expectations, especially in literacy and knowledge of the world. Previously above average standards reached on leaving the school dropped over the last two years to average but are now being recovered. Current pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set itself, including reaching the higher levels in reading and writing missed in recent years. Pupils who find learning difficult or who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are making progress in line with others as a result of the extra support they receive. This represents good progress since entering the school.

Pupils' personal development, together with their spiritual, social and moral development is good. Their good creative work is evident in the wealth of displays around the school and their involvement in artistic productions. Relationships are strong and, consequently, attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory, being affected by a small minority of persistent absentees that the school, together with local authority support, is working hard with. Pupils develop good social skills through the opportunities to work with each other and take responsibility within the school. They say they feel safe and valued. Pupils have a very good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, making good use of the school's many outdoor learning areas, good range of sporting activities and enjoying the healthy cooking sessions provided.

The good curriculum helps pupils develop essential life skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The school has strong links with the local community but is aware that its engagement beyond this is underdeveloped and, as a result, some pupils have a limited understanding of the wider world.

Overall teaching is good. Some is outstanding and some is satisfactory. In the best cases pace and challenge and a wide variety of suitable activities meet learners' needs and so good progress is made. In other cases progress is slower because teaching is less demanding and not so interesting. Marking and academic guidance through target setting and support is good, helped by the numerous teaching assistants and trainees in each classroom. Pastoral care is good and the school works well with outside agencies to promote the personal development of all pupils.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported by highly committed staff who work hard to create a calm but stimulating and supportive learning environment for all pupils. The school knows what it has to do to improve further through its own good self-evaluation and has both good capacity and detailed plans in place to achieve this. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school and support and challenge it well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When they start in the Nursery, most children have skills which are below those expected at their age. Their communication and social skills, and their knowledge and understanding of the world are particularly underdeveloped. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes work hard to address these weaknesses. They create an environment in which children are well looked after and where they feel happy and secure. Children feel confident to contribute to activities and to ask for help when they need it. They develop a genuine enthusiasm for learning and for engaging in play. Many children make particularly good progress in developing their social skills, learning to share resources and negotiate with others. They are increasingly willing to practise the pronunciation of more complex words, such as when describing different shapes. There is a good balance between adult-led, whole class activities and opportunities for more independent individual and group learning. The organisation of activities is well matched to the children's range of abilities, and good use is made of indoor and outdoor space. Movement around class and outside is well managed and carried out safely, without restricting children's enthusiasm. Teaching is good, with a particular emphasis placed on the accurate use of language, and closer observation of objects and the environment. As a result, children make good progress towards the expected standards at the beginning of Year 1, although their knowledge and understanding of the world remains well below the expected standards. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is well planned and children's progress is carefully monitored.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching across all subjects and year groups to that of the best so that pupils make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Help pupils to gain a better understanding of the diversity of the world beyond their local community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average and achievement is good. Pupils start Key Stage 1 with knowledge, understanding and skills that are below those expected of their age, especially in language, literacy and knowledge of the world. Pupils make good progress, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The above average standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 in previous years fell in 2007 and 2008 to broadly average levels. This was as a result of staffing changes and the impact of small groups of pupils with some very specific learning support needs. The school has undertaken significant work over the last two years to build such pupils' confidence and develop their attitudes to learning. This has been effective and the good assessment system shows that current pupils are on track, especially at the higher levels, to meet the challenging targets the school has set itself. Given attainment on entry to the school this represents good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral and social development. They increasingly recognise the feelings of others and learn to cooperate without the intervention of adults.

Their understanding of cultures dissimilar to their own is underdeveloped and some find it difficult to talk about events of which they have no direct experience. Behaviour is good. Pupils respond positively to the structure of school life and conduct themselves safely, handling equipment with care.

Pupils feel secure at school and speak about staff they can turn to when in difficulty. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and clearly enjoy the 'Activate' sessions, and the fresh fruit and water that is made available. Many pupils grow vegetables in the school allotment and take part in baking.

The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school but a small number have poor attendance records. Pupils contribute to and very much feel part of their school and local community and are enthusiastic about raising money for local charities. They are preparing well for the next stage of their lives by taking responsibility for their own property, acting as buddies to younger pupils and being part of the school council. Year 2 pupils speak confidently about their move to junior school next term. They feel and indeed are well prepared for this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good, but variable. In the best cases teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons that engage pupils and meet their learning needs well. A wide variety of activities and constant challenge ensures that learning is enjoyable and, as a result, progress is good. Teaching assistants and other helpers, often taking part in the school's extensive teacher training programme, provide valuable additional support. In one outstanding lesson, briskly paced activities using pairs of learners was followed up by a review of what had been covered, with pupils explaining confidently how they had reached their conclusions to numerical problems. High quality learning resulted. In some cases, however, lessons lack rigour, expectations are not high enough and the pace of learning slows. Marking is of a high standard across the school and provides clear guidance on what standards have been reached and what pupils have to do to improve their work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum that contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of their learning. The good personal, social and health education and the 'philosophy for children' programme promote their good personal development and well-being. Outdoor learning and a wide range of well attended extra sporting and other activities after school also help pupils in following a healthy lifestyle. ICT skills are well developed. These help prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. The school has begun to reshape its curriculum along more creative lines, combining different subjects within themes that stimulate pupils' interest and emphasise the links between areas of learning. This helps them understand the relevance of what they are learning and is reflected in the richness of displays and pupils' good artwork around the school. The coverage of other cultures around the world is, however, more limited and, as a result, some pupils have an underdeveloped sense of the complexity and diversity of the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a calm, secure and welcoming environment, with staff who are committed to helping pupils to learn and enjoy themselves. Suitable support is provided for more vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs. Bullying is very rare and staff take every opportunity to increase pupils' awareness and capacity to support each other.

The approach to ensuring pupils' safety is good. There is careful supervision of movement between activities. At the beginning of the day and after breaks, staff are ready at the doors to help pupils to settle into more formal learning. Safeguarding, risk assessment and child protection arrangements are fully in place, meet current requirements and are reinforced by staff's good knowledge of each child. The school is working hard with some parents and the Education Welfare Officer to improve the small amount of persistent absence. Much work has been undertaken recently to make pupils' targets more individualised. Pupils say they find them useful in their work and academic guidance is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and there are good plans in place to achieve this. She is supported by a talented and highly committed staff who work well together in moving the school forward. The school evaluates what it does well, communication between staff and subject leaders is very effective and, as a result, staff know what to do to bring about improvement. Recent dips in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been analysed, action taken and the previously good standards are being recovered. The school works well with the local community and external partners, and at this level community cohesion is good, but the school recognises through its own audits that its involvement outside of the immediate area is more limited. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, are especially active in visiting their linked subject areas, and carry out their challenge and support functions well.

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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?	2
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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

11 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Walney Infant and Nursery School, Cumbria, LA14 3BZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave my colleague and me when we inspected your school. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it. South Walney Infant and Nursery School is a good school. These are some of the things we found that are good about your school.

- You get a good start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the good teaching, care, leadership and management there.
- You have positive attitudes to learning, your behaviour is good and you work well together. Well done.
- You make good progress, especially those who find learning difficult.
- The range of subjects and learning activities provided by the school is good, especially the use of the outdoor areas such as the wildlife garden and allotment.
- You have a very good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Well done.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.
- Much of the teaching is good and there is some that is outstanding.

These are some of the things we have suggested to your school to make it an even better place to learn.

- Improve the quality of teaching across all subjects and year groups so that it matches the best in the school. This will help you make the best progress in all areas of learning.
- Help you gain a better understanding of other parts of the world so that you can appreciate the richness and difference of other cultures.

You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best and if you have any problems. You can also help by continuing to behave well and working hard as you do at the moment.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector