

Ormsgill Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131761
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	328641
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	George Crowther

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)	197
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	Mrs Tina Macur
Headteacher	Miss Helen Pemberton
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mill Bank Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 4AR
Telephone number	01229 894654

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an area in which there is considerable social disadvantage. It makes provision for children at the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). About half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, a high proportion compared with most schools. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high. A significant minority of pupils move to the school at times other than the normal points of admission.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ormsgill is a good school because it places a strong emphasis on providing the most appropriate support for each child's pastoral and learning needs. The school's good level of care and support helps pupils to overcome significant barriers to learning and to get the best from their education. The school works tirelessly to support pupils not only in school but also at home. Excellent links exist with other schools in the locality and the school's involvement in initiatives such as Creative Partnerships has a direct and meaningful impact on the achievement of pupils. The adult community education centre, with which the school works closely, provides much valued adult programmes which feeds through benefit the academic and personal development of many pupils.

The staff have created a calm and purposeful environment for learning in which each child feels valued and is helped to succeed. Pupils grow in confidence and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the wider world, both of which give them the motivation to enjoy learning. The staff keep a close track of each pupil's progress and provide extra support when needed. Parents say the school is doing a good job. A typical comment was 'It's a friendly school that serves its community well'. These strengths, combined with good teaching, help pupils to achieve well in both their academic and personal development. By Year 6, most pupils have improved their skills significantly and have positive attitudes to learning.

Throughout the school, many pupils find learning challenging because of difficulties in their lives and because they have weak academic skills, particularly in English. Good teaching in most lessons, a strong emphasis on motivating pupils and work that is well matched to their needs, lead to good progress. Occasionally, lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge to get the best out of the pupils. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are just below average and standards in English, although lower, are improving, particularly in writing. Considering the pupils' low starting points, these outcomes represent good achievement.

Pupils' personal development is good. When they start school, many pupils lack the personal skills to support their learning. By Year 6, pupils clearly enjoy school and are keen to learn. Behaviour is generally good, and the staff manage and support successfully the few pupils who find it difficult to behave well all the time. Relationships are good, with pupils showing considerable respect for each other. A typical comment was 'Everyone is friendly and we all get on well together'. The pupils know how to be healthy and they feel safe and cared for. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. Older pupils have significant responsibilities in school, such as acting as buddies for the younger ones. Pupils' good personal development, their improving academic skills and raised aspirations prepare them well for the future. A good curriculum, enriched by many activities that motivate the pupils, promotes learning and enjoyment successfully.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by all the staff, has a strong focus on raising standards. As a result the school has improved since the last inspection and has a good capacity to do so in future. Initiatives such as improving pupils' writing skills have been implemented successfully, and leaders can already show how this is having a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Leadership is shared effectively so that many staff contribute well to school improvement. Leaders check rigorously on the quality of its provision to ensure pupils are doing as well as they can. Although leaders were too cautious in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness, they have a clear view of what the school does well

and what needs to be done to improve further. This provides a good platform for further development.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision helps children to achieve well. When they join the Nursery, children's skills are well below those typical for their ages, particularly in language and personal development. Good teaching and effective leadership help the children to make good progress from very low starting points. Good standards of care ensure that children make a secure and happy start at school. They settle quickly into routines, grow in confidence and behave well. Concentration skills, however, are often weak and many children find it difficult to listen and to persevere in their tasks. The children are happy in school, clearly enjoying the wide range of stimulating and exciting activities. For example, children had great fun creating a bubble machine in the water tray. The curriculum supports all areas of children's learning effectively. A well-planned and consistent focus on learning letters and sounds together with good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills contribute well to improving children's language skills. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The staff team works together closely and they know individual children well. This means they are able to intervene to engage, support and encourage each child appropriately. Occasionally, when children are choosing their own activities, adults do not ensure that learning is purposeful enough. By the time children join Year 1, standards have risen, but are still well below average in many respects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in all aspects of English.
- Ensure all lessons provide sufficient pace and challenge to enable pupils to make rapid progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are well below age expectations. They are particularly weak in speech, language and personal skills and many have a very narrow knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In the Nursery and Reception classes children make good progress in all areas of their learning although they are still below the expectations for their age by the end of Reception. Throughout the rest of the school, many pupils' progress is hindered by significant barriers to learning. In many classes over 40% of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities for a variety of reasons. The school works hard to overcome these issues. With good teaching, most of the pupils reach average standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and the more able pupils make good progress to reach the higher levels in Key Stage 1 national assessments. However, many pupils still have below average reading and writing skills. In Key Stage 2, good support and guidance and good teaching enables pupils to progress further. Standards have been rising since 2005 and the unvalidated 2008 results indicate that the improvement has continued. Standards in mathematics and science were just below average. Standards in English were lower and the school is doing much to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in writing. This is having a positive impact on current standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified carefully and they receive good and well managed support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most children start school with weak personal skills, but these improve rapidly. They thoroughly enjoy school and, by Year 6, have positive attitudes to learning. A typical comment was 'I like the lessons because there is something new to learn every day'. Behaviour is good, and the few pupils who find it hard to behave well consistently are supported effectively. The pupils get on very well together, both when working in lessons and at playtimes. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Experiences in school, develop a keen interest in the environment, for example, the pupils grow vegetables for the school kitchen. Pupils say they feel safe in school because they know that, if they have a problem, the adults will help them. They make a good contribution to the community through a variety of special responsibilities. Pupils make good progress in developing a good understanding of their local and regional community, and steady progress in understanding about people different to themselves living in contrasting communities. The pupils' good social skills and positive attitudes to learning, coupled with their good achievement in academic learning, prepares them well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In most lessons, pupils make good progress because teachers place a strong emphasis on giving them the confidence to succeed. Interesting work is well matched to meet the wide range of individual needs. Skilled teaching assistants help many pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult, to make good progress. Teachers manage pupils' learning skilfully, varying activities to sustain pupils' concentration and using lots of praise to boost pupils' motivation. They explain new ideas in a lively way that makes pupils keen to learn. Occasionally, however, the pace of learning is not fast enough, and tasks in some lessons do not challenge and involve pupils sufficiently. Good systems for assessing pupils' skills and tracking their progress place a strong emphasis on how well pupils are learning. The information is used effectively to support pupils who may be falling behind. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is tracked particularly thoroughly, which has contributed to good gains for many of these pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' individual needs and is increasingly widening their horizons. Involvement in the Creative Partnership has enabled the school to enrich its curriculum with many exciting and innovative projects. For example, pupils' enthusiastic involvement in dance and drama productions has motivated many and boosted their confidence. Thorough planning takes into account the development of pupils' basic skills. The introduction of the 'Big Write' programme and a whole-school approach to teaching letters and sound are having a positive impact on reading and writing skills. Activities for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well-matched to their needs and help them to be confident in their learning and achieve well. Pupils' good personal development owes much to a strong programme of personal, social and health education. The curriculum is further enriched by visits to interesting places, through which learning becomes first-hand. For example, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed dressing

up as medieval characters during their visit to Furness Abbey. Pupils also enjoy and value the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a very caring community. It provides a secure environment in which pupils are happy, safe and ready to learn. The learning mentors play a central role in supporting pupils' personal development, often working successfully with those who are most vulnerable. Their base is a safe haven for pupils who are finding life challenging. The guidance for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good, well managed and enables many of these pupils to make good progress. The school works very effectively with a range of outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being. Measures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health, safety and well-being are in place and meet requirements. The school has effective systems to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Academic guidance is generally good. Pupils know their personal targets and work towards them. The best marking points out how pupils can improve their skills, but this is not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, well supported by all the staff, provides a strong lead in raising standards and sets a clear direction for future improvement. Leaders have created a very positive environment for learning, which tackles the challenges many pupils face, and gives them the confidence to succeed. The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is too cautious, particularly in terms of pupils' academic progress. In reality, leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a clear view of how pupils' learning can improve further. For example, weaknesses in pupils' writing skills were identified, action taken and, as a result, pupils are making more rapid progress; leaders are good at checking carefully on the success of their actions. Systems to track pupils' progress are used effectively, which enables leaders to spot potential underachievement and provide additional support. The quality of pupils' learning in lessons is monitored carefully but insufficient action has been taken to tackle some weaknesses. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a strong focus on how the school can improve. The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. It carefully monitors and evaluates the impact of initiatives to support parents in the community. It works hard to help pupils understand others in their local area and town community and to extend pupils' understanding the way people live in places further afield.

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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?	1
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	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	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?	2
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**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ormsgill Nursery and Primary School, Cumbria, LA14 4AR

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I and my colleague visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Your school is a good school where you enjoy your learning and make good progress. We were struck by the very happy, positive atmosphere and the way that everyone gets on very well together.

When we talked to you and watched you working in lessons, it was clear you really enjoy being at school. Many of you find learning quite difficult, but your teachers do a good job in making lessons interesting and giving you the confidence to succeed. You also have lots of support from all the adults in school. When I visited your 'Praise' assembly, everyone celebrated the efforts children are making to improve their motivation and their work; this shows that, if you try hard, you can succeed. You behave well and you are polite. The contributions many of you make to the day-to-day life of the school, such as older pupils acting as buddies for the younger ones, help to make it a place where everyone respects each other.

From visiting some of your lessons and looking at your work, it is clear you are making good progress, but many of you still have weak skills in English. The teaching is good in most lessons, but there are times when the learning moves rather slowly and you are not involved enough in the activities. You say there are lots of interesting things to do at school, and we agree. You are working particularly hard to improve your writing and you say you enjoy these lessons. You also enjoy visits out of school and the many clubs you attend. These activities add significantly to your enjoyment of school and understanding of the wider world beyond Ormsgill. The staff do a good job in providing the care and support that helps you to do well at school. Your headteacher and the staff are doing a good job in helping your school to get better.

We have asked your school to improve your learning by:

- improving your skills in speaking, reading and writing
- making sure that you learn quickly in all your lessons and that you are fully involved in activities.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school.

Yours sincerely

George Crowther

Lead inspector