

Oughterside Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112138
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	335408
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Penny Gray
Headteacher	Mr Nick Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
School address	Aspatria Wigton Cumbria CA7 2PY
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. He visited each class regularly and held meetings with governors, staff and a representative of the local authority. He observed the school's work, including its safeguarding arrangements, and examined its documentation and assessment and monitoring records. Conversations were held with pupils and a wide sample of their books was scrutinised. The results of the school's own recent survey of parents' and carers' views were analysed.

He reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' learning and progress since the July 2008 inspection
- the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to monitor and guide pupils in their work
- the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors in addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection.

Information about the school

This is a very small, rural school. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. Class 1 (covering Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3) comprises 10 boys. Class 2 has 18 boys and girls from Years 4 to 6. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils join the school part-way through their primary education. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. There is independently run Nursery provision on site which is the subject of a separate inspection and its report will be published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

At the time of the previous inspection in July 2008 the school was deemed to require special measures. It has made good progress in addressing the concerns raised and therefore, in accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Oughterside Foundation School is providing a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is now average. The school exceeded its most recent statutory targets. The standard of work seen in the school shows that current Year 6 pupils are well placed to match, and in some cases exceed, past performance levels. A higher proportion of them are on course to attain at the higher Level 5 than in previous years, demonstrating the success of the school's strategies to improve attainment. Assessment results at the end of Year 2 have improved since the previous inspection and are now average, further demonstrating the school's success at securing improvements. The Key Stage 1 underachievement of the past has been addressed successfully and reversed.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because the action taken by leaders and managers to address weaknesses has been robust and effective.

Self-evaluation is accurate, and appropriate development priorities have been identified to take the school forward. There is now stability and continuity in staffing. Teaching is good and at times outstanding. It is a significant factor in improving pupils' learning and progress in lessons, which in turn is beginning to show through in improved attainment. Learning activities are structured in difficulty to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes and accurate assessments are used well in planning and to monitor and support progress in lessons. As a result, learning and progress in lessons are good and this is now becoming evident in improved attainment. Curriculum provision is satisfactory and the school recognises that, because of its small size and rural location, more needs to be done to broaden pupils' experiences, for example in the creative arts. In addition, outdoor provision for the younger children is limited and the plans in place for improving this have yet to be implemented.

The care and support pupils receive are good, underpinning their good personal development. They become confident and articulate youngsters by the time they leave, keen to make the most of the next stage in their education. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and every step is taken to ensure pupils' welfare. Leadership, management and governance are good. The drive for improvement over the last year has been shared by all staff and governors and expectations for the school are high. A recent survey undertaken by governors revealed a high degree of satisfaction among parents and carers. However, a minority of parents and carers have yet to be convinced

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of the school's strengths.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden curriculum provision by:
 - providing more opportunities for cross-curricular working to make the links between subjects clear to pupils
 - extending opportunities for pupils' creative development
 - improving the range and quality of the facilities for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the school's partnership with parents and carers by:
 - improving communication about its work and performance
 - highlighting its successes
 - encouraging greater community involvement in its day-to-day life.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve well in lessons and enjoy their learning. They give their answers and explain their ideas confidently because they know that they will be heard respectfully. When challenged by the teacher to explain the 'how' and 'why' of their answers they respond at length.

In such a very small school, national assessment and test results can vary widely, as can the skills of children starting in Reception. While the very small numbers of pupils taking national tests mean that it is difficult to assess trends accurately, it is clear that attainment is improving and that the school's strategies for improvement are having a positive effect at Key Stages 1 and 2. The accelerated pace of pupils' learning has raised academic achievement from inadequate in 2008 to satisfactory and the good pace of learning seen in lessons and pupils' books shows that the improving trend continues. This is so for all groups of pupils, including those with high prior attainment and the few pupils who join the school part-way through their primary education. However, the good progress seen in lessons has not yet had sufficient time to impact on pupils' progress over longer periods as they move through the year groups. Hence, their learning and progress overall are judged to be satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive in lessons.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good. For example, they are adept at using computers for research and data analysis and for presenting their written work in various forms. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory, commensurate with pupils' attainment

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levels in English and mathematics. Pupils' understanding of the world around them through such subjects as science, history and geography is also satisfactory. The school accepts that more could be done to make the links between these subjects clear to give pupils a coherent understanding of the natural and physical environment.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, are good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school and inspection evidence shows that they are. They know what promotes well-being and so take plenty of exercise and eat healthily. They enjoy school, evident from the above average attendance rates, their punctual arrival and the high uptake for extra-curricular activities. The older pupils help the younger children as mentors and help the staff with routine daily tasks. There is no formal school council but the family ethos means that views and concerns are heard and acted upon. Pupils' improving attainment and satisfactory achievement mean that they are now satisfactorily prepared academically for the next stage in their learning. Their excellent behaviour and conscientious endeavour, and their ability to work well collaboratively and independently, mean that they have the personal qualities for future success.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good and at times outstanding. This is resulting in improvements to the quality of pupils' learning and their rates of progress in lessons and is becoming evident in improved attainment. Expectations are high and work is challenging. Good use is made of ICT for teaching, as seen in Class 1 where most pupils were actively engaged in learning from the interactive whiteboard under the teacher's guidance and where the older pupils were working independently on computers. Teachers' questioning is good, not only to test understanding but to get pupils reflecting upon and speaking about their work. Such rigorous questioning in Class 2 led pupils to discuss and interpret Victorian employment data, and so understand the social and cultural characteristics of the period.

The curriculum caters well for pupils' personal and social needs and there is a good balance between provision for their basic skills and for their spiritual, moral and cultural development. They therefore have a good understanding of the diversity of society and that with rights come responsibilities. Reflection time is built into assemblies and lessons to nurture their sense of self-worth and respect for others. Provision covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and specialists are brought in to teach French and physical education. There is a range of well-attended extra-curricular activities and trips away and frequent visitors to the school. The links between subjects, however, are not always sufficiently apparent to make pupils' knowledge and understanding coherent. In addition, the school recognises the need to broaden its provision for pupils' creative development, particularly in music.

The care and support afforded pupils are good. Class sizes are small and because each pupil is known by every adult in the school the monitoring of academic and personal development is rigorous. Intervention is timely and effective when problems arise. This accounts for the improvement in achievement over the last year and pupils' current good progress in lessons. Risk assessments are thorough prior to pupils handling equipment or going on visits and regular health and safety audits are carried out to ensure that the school is a safe working environment. Pupils receive good advice and support when they join the school, when they move between key stages and in preparation for the transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The significant improvements since July 2008 are down to effective, shared leadership and management driving up the quality of provision overall and teaching in particular. Teachers, teaching assistants, governors and administrative staff pulled together to raise expectations and have benefited from the good support provided by the local authority and through partnerships with others. Their efforts have been appreciated by most parents and carers but there remain a small number who have yet to recognise the gains made. The school is a calm and harmonious place to work in and its contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory although it recognises that there is more to be done in the local community to improve this. There are effective procedures in place to ensure that pupils are looked after well. The school adopts good practice in this regard and safeguarding is good. There is an equal chance for every boy and girl. A strong team of governors brings a wide range of expertise and they work closely with the headteacher, who has been pivotal in sustaining morale and communicating a vision for a better and improved school. The number of pupils has fallen slightly because of demographic changes and the school has a budget deficit. Suitable plans are in place to eradicate this. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills when they start in Reception are at the levels expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and reach average standards by the

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beginning of Year 1. They settle quickly because of the school's good induction procedures and because they are cared for and supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. They also benefit from the added stimulation of having older pupils in the class who talk to them, encourage them in their work and show them how to cooperate and share. As a result, they soon become confident learners, prepared to find out things for themselves and try new experiences. Provision is no better than satisfactory because opportunities for outside play are limited and restrict the range of active learning activities. Plans are in place to extend provision but have yet to be implemented. Children understand the importance of keeping well and they eat healthy meals and snacks and exercise regularly. There are effective procedures in place to keep them safe and they talk about how much they enjoy school. The leadership and management of this stage in children's learning are satisfactory.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires are not normally distributed to parents and carers for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 unless the inspectors have specific reasons for the school to do so. In this inspection, account was taken of the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views and is reflected in the content of the report and its recommendations.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oughterside Foundation School, Cumbria, CA7 2PY

Thank you for the warm welcome I received when I inspected your school. I enjoyed the two days I spent with you and only wish I had had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing. You told me a lot about your trips away and the visitors who come to speak to you. You also said that you enjoy school and your good attendance record and excellent behaviour show this.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. You are making good progress in lessons and you have many impressive personal qualities. You all get on very well together and told me that there is never any bullying or unpleasantness. I saw that you can work well together and also on your own. Your speaking and listening skills are very good and you show respect for the opinions and ideas of others. Sometimes pupils join your school part-way through a year and you always make them feel welcome and help them to settle in.

Many of you stressed how much you like being in such a small school where everyone knows each other and where the staff take such good care of you. The learning tasks in lessons are made different for each pupil so that he or she can make the best possible progress. It also means that those pupils who make quick progress can help the younger ones and so become responsible and confident learners themselves.

The recent survey organised by the governors showed that the vast majority of your parents and carers are very happy with the progress you are making. A very small minority of parents and carers were not so positive and I have asked the school to show them just how much things have improved over the last year. I have also asked that more is done to broaden the curriculum to give you a better understanding of the way subjects link together and to start on the work to extend the outdoor provision for the younger children. You can help by continuing to work hard and enthusiastically in lessons.

My best wishes to you all

Yours faithfully

Brian Dower

Inspector

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