

Ireby CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112251
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337881
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheila Mawer

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adrian Hyde
Headteacher	Mrs A Dickinson
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
School address	Ireby Wigton Cumbria CA7 1DS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed six hours of learning, which included visits to eight lessons and looking at pupils' work. The three teachers in the school were observed at least twice. Meetings were also held with staff and pupils and representatives of the governing body. In observing the school's work a range of documents were examined including the school improvement plan, assessment information, safeguarding procedures, minutes of governors' meeting and records of monitoring and evaluation. In total about 50% of the inspectors' time was spent looking at the quality of pupils' learning. The inspector also analysed the 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. In addition, questionnaires were received from 17 pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- whether pupils are making the good progress suggested by the school and particularly the more able pupils in writing
- to see whether pupils take the initiative in lessons and show responsibility around the school
- the effectiveness of the headteacher, middle leaders and governors in driving improvements to the teaching and learning
- the extent to which the school formally evaluates the effectiveness of community cohesion.

Information about the school

This small and rather isolated village school serves a rural area in North Cumbria. All pupils are from White British families. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. While the proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is above average, the percentage of pupils with a statement of need is below average. Over the years an above average proportion of pupils join the school in Key Stage 2, other than the usual times. Since 2007 most of these pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides part-time education for Nursery children in the mornings and full-time education for Reception children. The school has received many awards reflecting its commitment to promote healthy living, the arts and inclusion. The headteacher is currently on maternity leave. The school is being led in her absence by an acting headteacher. The school has childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body and this is being inspected separately.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ireby continues to provide its pupils with a good education. Pupils achieve well because key aspects of provision have been strengthened since the last inspection. Care, guidance and support are now outstanding. The school has created an excellent ethos and inclusive environment for all pupils. Those facing barriers to their learning and pupils joining from other schools receive exceptional support. Pupils appreciate the high levels of care they receive and say they feel safe in school. They behave well and display positive attitudes to their learning and consideration for others. They particularly enjoy increased responsibilities in lessons and around the school. The school council are proud of how they have improved playground facilities, including making a replica Viking longboat with parents. The engagement with parents and carers is a strength of the school. Communications with them are excellent and they are increasingly involved in the school's decision making process. Parents and carers for their part actively support their children's learning. Partnerships with other providers contribute significantly to the rich curriculum and compensates for the school's relative isolation.

Leaders including governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because they evaluate its work effectively and have clear and appropriate priorities for development. They know for example that while community cohesion is promoted well, the formal monitoring and evaluation of its impact on the school community and beyond is at an early stage of development. Leaders have demonstrated strong ambition and drive in addressing issues from the last inspection. Pupils now have greater opportunities to write more widely across the curriculum and this is enabling standards to rise in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. There have also been significant improvements to attendance from broadly average to high. In this positive climate the school has a good capacity to improve further. It also gives good value for money.

Children enter school with skills that vary each year, but are usually below expected levels for their age. They make good progress and reach average attainment by Year 6. Attainment in reading and mathematics is above average, with more able pupils doing well. The good teaching has many strengths, particularly in engaging pupils in their learning through excellent relationships. Writing is taught well in Key Stage 1, helped by the introduction of the 'Big Writing' project. In Key Stage 2, although there are good features to teaching writing, there is a lack of challenge in the planning and assessment of writing tasks for more able pupils. This slows their progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Accelerate the progress made by more able pupils in writing in Key Stage 2 by:
 - planning harder work that will help pupils to reach higher levels and make good progress
 - setting and sharing challenging targets in writing with pupils that are focused on their capabilities
 - marking work that gives pupils clear and ambitious pointers for improvement
- Improve community cohesion by:
 - formally monitoring and evaluating the impact of its work within the school and beyond.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils learn and achieve well in lessons. They respond positively to the challenges set by their teachers and show good levels of engagement and enjoyment in their learning. In lessons they are keen to answer questions that are hard and to share their ideas with others. They benefit from small class sizes, where they show good levels of initiative. Pupils in a numeracy lesson in Year 2 enjoyed working with a partner to gather and evaluate information for a data handling exercise. Throughout the task they worked responsively together to keep an accurate tally of their results. Pupils' keenness to succeed is reflected in high levels of attendance. In activities such as recycling materials or helping in the wildlife garden, pupils show a mature attitude to the tasks they willingly undertake. These personal qualities and good progress in the basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points. Over the years attainment has ranged from significantly above average to below average, due to very small cohorts. In Year 2, attainment in 2009 was significantly above average and is currently above average. Results in Year 6 are affected by a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than usual, who join the school during Key Stage 2. In 2009, attainment was broadly average in Year 6, with above average attainment in mathematics and reading. Similar standards are expected from the current Year 6. More able pupils in Key Stage 2 are doing well in reading and mathematics. Progress is slower in writing and preventing pupils from reaching higher levels. Some pupils say they would like harder work.

Nearly all pupils behave well. Recent initiatives to improve the behaviour of a few pupils have been very successful. The questionnaires completed by pupils are very positive. In particular they say they feel safe in school. This reflects the schools secure environment and the opportunities pupils have to learn safe practises. There have been no bullying or racial incidents for many years. Through its success as a healthy and active school, pupils have a good understanding of keeping healthy and fit. They eagerly participate in a wide range of physical activities during and after school, which includes cycling

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proficiency. The school council are active in the school and local community. They help to organise an annual summer barbeque in the village and have planned improvements to their toilets in school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school's exceptionally strong and supportive atmosphere provides a safe and welcoming environment for pupils and their families. Pupils say 'We are like a happy family together'. Parents and pupils praise unreservedly the high quality of care provided by the staff. In this very small school, staff know their pupils extremely well and any concerns are quickly resolved. Procedures for monitoring safeguarding, behaviour and high levels of attendance are well established and effective. Nurture groups are successful in helping the most vulnerable pupils and those who are new to the school to fully participate in learning. Support agencies work very closely with the school in the early identification and support for pupils who require additional help. Transition arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary education are very thorough. This ensures that pupils are confident and happy when they move on to a much larger

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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school.

Because teaching is good, pupils learn well and make good progress. Well trained support staff confidently delivers work that is closely matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent relationships support all pupils in the school and especially the few with challenging behaviour. This allows all pupils to learn well and without disruption. Teachers plan stimulating activities that actively engage pupils in new learning. Occasionally in the brisk pace to lessons, the independent tasks are not explained clearly enough to pupils and this slows the learning, as pupils are unsure of what to do. Assessment is good in Key Stage 1. Tasks are matched to pupils' different abilities and targets help them to improve their work and make good progress. In Key Stage 2, assessment is not as well established in writing for more able pupils. Tasks are the same for most ability groups and lack challenge for more able pupils. Targets are not shared with pupils or focused enough on their capabilities in writing. Marking does not always provide clear and ambitious pointers for improvement. Consequently more able pupils are making satisfactory rather than good progress in writing.

The curriculum for pupils in the mixed-age classes is well organised and appropriate. It is considerably broadened and enriched through strong links with other providers and by enrichment activities. The close partnerships with other schools and organisations impacts well on the health, fitness and well-being of pupils. The local music service is actively used to enable as many pupils as possible to learn musical instruments. The curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills. The bright displays around the school illustrate the many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in different subjects. Although the school has taken steps to identify pupils who are gifted and talented and organised some extension activities, there is scope to develop these opportunities further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher works successfully with all staff and governors, valuing their contributions to school improvement. She is central to the school's ethos, direction and success. Strong and supportive teamwork is strengthened by good management systems, clear lines of communication and high expectations of what can be achieved. Leaders at all levels in the school are successful in building on the school's strengths and

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identifying clear and accurate issues to drive improvements. The teaching and learning is effectively monitored and evaluated. The role of the governing body in supporting and challenging the school has improved. Governors employ a good range of strategies for finding out how well the school is doing and are clearly holding it to account. While they are fully involved in checking the school's effectiveness, they are currently seeking training to extend their skills in monitoring and evaluation. The headteacher and governor with responsibility for special educational needs and/or disabilities are rigorous in ensuring that these pupils make the same progress as others. Equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve as well as they can is strongly promoted, while acknowledging that there is more to do in writing in Key Stage 2. The school's inclusiveness and determination to eliminate any discrimination is recognised in its Chartermark award. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet current requirements. Leaders make sure that all policies and practises for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are of a good standard. Community cohesion is actively promoted. The school is at the heart of the local community. Assemblies and many other events are planned in the village, so parents and local residents can attend. Pupils are knowledgeable about different communities and cultures in cities such as Liverpool, where visits are made to different faith centres. Pupils also write to pupils in Nigeria. The monitoring and evaluation of community cohesion and the impact of its work is largely informal.

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	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 nearly all are working at

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the expected levels. With very small numbers and generous staffing levels, the children quickly settle into classroom routines. They behave well and feel safe and secure in a very caring environment, which meets all their welfare requirements. Excellent relationships with adults ensure that children are happy and co-operative learners. Nursery children enjoy snack time when they choose healthy foods and tidy up afterwards. Nursery and Reception children confidently take the initiative to plan some of their own learning. The current topic on traditional tales is giving them good opportunities for imaginative play. While resources are mostly good, there is a shortage of resources for role-play, especially dressing-up clothes.

The organisation of Early Years Foundation Stage works effectively for both Nursery and Reception children and provision is good. Morning sessions provide a wide range of stimulating activities, either led by adults or chosen by the children themselves. Indoor and outdoor facilities are good. Provision is particularly strong in promoting children's early literacy and numeracy skills, through practical activities. The plasma screen is often used to extend the children's number skills through songs and rhymes. During the inspection a group of Reception children were skilfully helped to write their own addition and subtraction number sentences up to 10. The good focus on phonics is helping the children to gain confidence and skills in literacy.

Shared leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. Planning and assessment are very thorough. This ensures that the needs of the children in Reception are met in the afternoons when they work alongside older pupils.

The partnership between home and school is excellent. As well as very thorough preparations to introduce the children to school, parents and carers are kept fully informed of their children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response to the Ofsted questionnaire. Parents and carers are delighted with what the school provides. In nearly all responses, including pupils' safety and enjoyment for school, all parents expressed agreement and a large majority strongly agreed. Several parents and carers commented on the dedication of the headteacher and how they were looking forward to her return. Some also noted with appreciation the work of the acting headteacher in leading and managing the school

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well in the headteacher's absence. There were no significant issues for the school. The inspector agrees with all the positive views expressed by parents and one comment in particular. 'I have had children at the school for eight years. During this time I have seen the school develop and strengthen in terms of effective teaching and leadership. It has enabled the children to become confident, valued and focused on their learning'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ireby CofE School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 49 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	71	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	62	6	29	2	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	71	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	62	7	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	67	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	67	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	76	4	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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.



5 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ireby C of E Primary School, Wigton, CA7 1DS

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when I visited your school recently. In your small school I managed to speak to nearly everyone during my two days with you. A special thanks goes to Year 6 and the school council who gave me a lot of useful information about the school. You all told me you go to a good school and you enjoy your learning a great deal. I agree with you. These are some of the things I found out about your school.

- You are making good progress and achieving well and reaching expected standards by Year 6
- You receive outstanding care, guidance and support and this is a real strength of the school
- You behave well and enjoy learning and taking responsibility
- You all have a good understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy
- Teaching is good and the rich curriculum provides you with a lot of interesting activities and clubs after school
- Your school is led and managed well by the headteacher, the staff and governors. They work very hard to make your school successful. They have developed very close partnerships with your parents and carers.

Even in good school as yours there are things that can be improved. I have asked the school to give some of you harder work in writing and to share more challenging targets with you, to help you make more progress. I have also asked the school to check that the work you do on the local and wider communities is helping you to understand how different communities get along in Britain and around the world.

Good luck to you all for the future

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sheila Mawer

Lead Inspector

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