

# Coniston CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112279
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	337891
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	60
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Mark East
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steven Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Shepherd's Bridge Coniston Cumbria LA21 8AL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons taught by four teachers, an assembly and break-times. They held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They analysed the school's documentation, data on pupils' progress, welfare arrangements and the 21 questionnaires that were returned by parents, as well as those from staff and pupils.

- the extent to which achievement and standards in Key Stage 2 are improving in all subjects
- the level of challenge in lessons for all pupils in Key Stage 2, including the more-able
- the effectiveness of the school's promotion of equal opportunities
- the management of pupils' behaviour
- the rigour of self-evaluation and planning at all levels of leadership and its effectiveness in securing and sustaining school improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a small primary school. All pupils come from White British heritage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school has a Nursery class which children attend in the afternoons only.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Although pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 1, their progress falters in Key Stage 2. In 2009, pupils in Year 6 made inadequate progress and little has changed this year. Attainment has been falling in Key Stage 2 over the last three years and is average at best; this represents inadequate achievement over time. Teaching does not provide pupils in Key Stage 2 with sufficient challenge and motivation, and the school's leaders have not succeeded in improving the situation despite support from the local authority.

There is a subdued atmosphere in school that does little to motivate pupils and enhance their personal and spiritual development. Most pupils are not unhappy but are ambivalent about school. They enjoy the interesting activities outside lessons and lead healthy lifestyles. They are amenable and often well behaved in lessons, but lack enthusiasm for learning. Occasionally, disrespect towards teachers undermines effective learning. Pupils say that behaviour in the playground is satisfactory but not always harmonious. Staff are vigilant about pupils' safety and the more potentially vulnerable pupils are well supported. However, staff training for safeguarding pupils and recruitment requirements are not up-to-date, although the governing body is taking action to address this. Consequently the care for pupils is inadequate.

Staff morale is low. Leaders and managers do not inspire teachers or lift their confidence and skills. New systems for assessment are being introduced but are not being applied quickly or consistently enough. In Key Stage 2, there are particular weaknesses. For example, pupils refer to a lack of information about their progress. Lesson planning is not detailed enough and does not take sufficient account of the needs of all groups of pupils. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is not stimulating and basic skills are not developed enough through other subjects. By contrast, teaching in Key Stage 1 is good as a result of high expectations, skilful questioning and stimulating topics.

While many parents and carers are supportive of the school, a significant minority are not. They have been concerned about the lack of success in resolving problems in Key Stage 2 and improving pupils' personal development. The governing body is aware of these concerns and has worked hard to overcome them but has not yet succeeded. The school's plans lack detail and there is too little impetus and monitoring to ensure

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success. There has been little improvement to the school since the last inspection despite better facilities. Leadership lacks the determination and ability to do secure future improvement. As a result, the school has insufficient capacity to generate improvement and to sustain it.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment and improve the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that:
  - - teachers have higher expectations of pupils
  - - lesson planning is more detailed, tightly linked to assessment and consistently challenging for all pupils
  - - pupils are fully aware of how well they are doing for their age
  - - the curriculum in English, mathematics and science is more engaging
- Improve the ethos of the school and the morale of pupils by:
  - - establishing a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour
  - - increasing the rigour of procedures for ensuring pupils' well-being and for meeting safeguarding requirements
  - - ensuring the school offers opportunities for increasing spirituality by pupils
- Enhance the school's ability to sustain improvement by:
  - - creating and monitoring detailed action plans based on clear analyses and linked to precise outcomes for pupils
  - - developing better channels of communication with parents and carers
  - - monitoring teaching and assessment strategies rigorously

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to learning in lessons. They like to learn but they are seldom inspired and encouraged, especially in Key Stage 2. As a result, the pace of work is satisfactory at best. Younger pupils are more interested in their work than older pupils. They listen well and participate happily; as a result, they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment at this key stage continues to be above average, and is rising steadily year on year.

Attainment in Key Stage 2 is declining as a result of inadequate teaching. Although attainment is within the average range for the past three years, it has fallen considerably, especially in 2009. Too few pupils achieved the higher levels; writing remains a relative weakness. Pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 has also been falling and was inadequate last year. There is little sign of improvement in the current Year 6 and in most other year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily because of the extra support they receive. However, there is uneven achievement between groups of pupils and especially between key stages.

Pupils appreciate the clubs on offer; however, they would like to see more sports at school. Staff take the opportunities to take pupils out and about in the Lake District where they acquire ecological knowledge. Experts from the local community work

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effectively with pupils to help them understand the local context. Pupils know about the benefits of a balanced diet. Behaviour is now satisfactory, although pupils still have concerns about squabbles in the playground and occasional bullying. They feel safe but older pupils are not very happy at school, as their questionnaires indicated. There is too little fun or vitality in the school to raise their aspirations.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 1. Here, lessons have a clear sense of purpose, are stimulating and suitably varied in terms of the challenge presented to pupils. Planning takes account of the different learning needs of pupils as well as their prior learning. Interesting themes and activities within lessons motivate pupils and encourage them to concentrate. In Key Stage 2, teaching is inadequate, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Expectations of pupils are not high enough. New assessment systems have not yet improved the quality of lesson planning. Pupils appreciate guidance from staff in class and through marking although they say this is inconsistent. However, pupils say that they do not always know how well they are

<sup>1</sup> 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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doing.

Although the school takes advantage of its location to bring some enrichment to the curriculum, its basic provision is satisfactory. Day trips to climb Harrison Stickle, and participation in the Coniston Water Festival exemplify some of the rich opportunities taken. In Key Stage 1, in particular, where the curriculum is good, some of these activities are used in lessons to improve basic skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result, some writing activities are interesting and based on first-hand experiences. Otherwise, planning is not creative or tailored enough to motivate all pupils and spur them on to make good progress. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is sufficient to ensure that they make satisfactory progress.

Staff want the best for the pupils and are supportive of them in times of need. A good deal of effort has been successful in improving behaviour and helping more potentially vulnerable pupils, although there is still work to do. Some pupils say that they are reluctant to confide in teachers when they have personal concerns. Even so, almost all parents feel that the school keeps their child safe. Staff are suitably trained in first aid and ensure that the building is secure. The rate of attendance, although average, is beginning to slip. Transition through the school is good, especially from the Reception class into Year 1, so pupils lose little time settling into new classrooms. However, significant weaknesses in the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils mean that care, guidance and support are inadequate overall.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The school's provision and pupils' outcomes have declined markedly since the last inspection and leaders have failed to stem the decline. Senior leaders are aware of important concerns but lack the skills and drive to put them right. Monitoring of teaching is piecemeal and not focused on outcomes for pupils and, as a consequence, the impact of new initiatives is not evaluated accurately. Key action plans are vague and not effective enough to underpin and guide school improvement.

The governing body is well aware that the school is under-performing and, together with the local authority, has made efforts to improve provision but, to date, without success. Most of the governors have been appointed since the last inspection. They have clear expectations of staff, but do not secure improvement with sufficient rigour.

The safeguarding of pupils is inadequate. Although some systems to secure this are in

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place, the training of staff in child protection and recruitment requirements are not maintained as they should be. Suitable risk assessments are in place and governors are responding to the issues raised.

Those parents that responded to the questionnaire indicate a satisfactory level of engagement. Communication is regular but not effective in allaying concerns. There are some good partnerships with outside agencies, such as the National Trust and the local authority, but the impact of such links on pupils' outcomes is limited. There is good interaction with the local community and the school is beginning to acquaint pupils with cultural diversity in the wider world through links with African schools. Leaders accept there is still some way to go to promote community cohesion fully.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get a satisfactory start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They enter school with skills and abilities typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Reception, reach standards expected of five-year-olds. They benefit from the time spent with pupils in Years 1 and 2, which strengthens social, literacy and other skills. At these times, teaching is challenging and learning is good. Sometimes, they are taught separately and provision is variable. It was good, for example, when they dipped for invertebrates in the school pond. At other times, learning does not interest children enough so they become restless and even disrespectful. There is a suitable blend of activities and children are encouraged to learn for themselves, although not always with sufficient guidance.



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Children's personal development is satisfactory and closely mirrors that of all other pupils, as the school brings them together for many activities. Staff take satisfactory care of children; they have, for example, undertaken the relevant first aid training for children of this age. There has been some good recent improvement in outdoor facilities and the day-to-day management is efficient.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

A small number of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. Of these, responses were mostly positive. However, over a quarter of parents' responses expressed some concerns and commented about the provision in Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement and the capacity of the school's leadership to resolve these issues. Inspection evidence supports these views. Some parents were not sure that pupils' behaviour and aspects of care were good enough. Although inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory, during the inspection, they found that while some aspects of care are satisfactory the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet current requirements.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coniston CofE Primary 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 inspection team received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 60 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	55	9	41	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	55	8	36	2	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	32	13	59	2	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	23	15	68	1	5	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	9	41	13	59	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	23	14	64	3	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	45	12	55	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)	7	32	11	50	1	5	1	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	23	16	73	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	18	12	55	1	5	3	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	18	17	77	0	0	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	5	23	12	55	2	9	1	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	32	13	59	1	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



26 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coniston CofE Primary School, Coniston, LA21 8AL

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. As I explained to those of you I met, your views really did matter in helping my colleague and me to decide how well the school is doing.

Your school does some things well. You have plenty of space and facilities indoors and outside, you benefit from activities within the Lake District and you lead healthy lifestyles. Much of what the school provides for you is satisfactory and helps your personal development. Your behaviour has improved and is satisfactory. When work is interesting, you concentrate and work hard. Even so, it is clear that you do not all fully enjoy school at present and your attendance is slipping.

Although you make good progress in Years 1 and 2, progress is inadequate in Key Stage 2 and standards have fallen. You are not, therefore, receiving a good enough education. Lessons are not planned well enough to give you the challenge and stimulation that you need. You say that you do not have a clear picture of how well you are doing. You are looked after satisfactorily in some ways but there are things the school must do to improve your sense of well-being and to make sure it does what the government requires to ensure you are all kept safe. The school's plans are, at the moment, not good enough to put these matters right.

Therefore, we have decided that the school needs 'special measures' to ensure it improves and does its best for you. In this way, the school will receive extra help in putting all these problems right and in encouraging you. You can all play your part by attending regularly, working hard and behaving responsibly.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector

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