

Askam Village School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 112409 |
| Local Authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 337926 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 June 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | David Byrne |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 180 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Susan Baker |
| Headteacher | Miss Fiona Crellin |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 September 2006 |
| School address | Lots Road Askam-in-Furness Cumbria LA16 7DA |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 9 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, pupils and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the progress and attainment of pupils, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The inspection team analysed 96 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement and progress of all groups of pupils including the more able
- the quality of teaching and the curriculum and the impact on pupils' progress and learning
- the effectiveness of the leaders and managers in driving forward improvement
- the quality of the policy for promoting community cohesion and its impact on pupils' attitudes and understanding.

Information about the school

This is a small school serving a relatively settled community. The large majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds with none speaking English as an additional language. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An above average proportion is identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average. The school has gained the Inclusion Charter Mark, the Activemark, the Arts Mark (Silver), and the Sing Up Award (Gold). Since the last inspection, there have been significant staff changes including the appointment of a new headteacher and the restructuring of the senior leadership team.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils make good progress in their personal development but could do better academically. Parents and carers are accurate in rating highly the levels of care within the school. This, coupled with good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, contributes to the large majority of pupils behaving well, making good friends and treating others with respect. Most have a good understanding of the choices required to be healthy and safe. As school councillors and sing up leaders during playtimes, pupils contribute positively to the cohesion within the school. Their knowledge and understanding of diversity within society, however, is relatively weak.

After starting Nursery with levels of development below typical for their age, good progress lifts attainment to average by the end of Reception. The Reception children do not have the same good access to continuous learning outdoors as those in Nursery which holds down progress in some aspects of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, progress has faltered and has been too slow in recent times but is currently improving and is now at a satisfactory level. Attainment at Year 6 in English and mathematics is currently average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of well targeted support. In a wide variety of sports and in aspects of music, namely playing flutes and singing, pupils excel.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with strengths in upper Key Stage 2. While lessons are well managed, the needs of the more able pupils are not consistently met and expectations are often too low for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In classes where pupils develop a good understanding of what they need to do to improve, their progress is good. This is not the case in most classes. The curriculum is in the process of being overhauled. Considerable strengths exist in music and sport. Until recently, however, not enough attention was given to the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). This is being rectified and achievement in each area is improving.

The headteacher, supported by the local authority, is developing a culture of change. The programme of improvement, however, lacks sufficient pace to achieve consistency in the quality of teaching. The new senior leadership team and regenerated governing body are increasingly monitoring the school's performance. An adequate and improving picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses exists. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise further the progress and achievement of pupils by:

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- making sure that the quality of provision explicitly meets the needs of the more able pupils
- improving the quality of teaching so that higher expectations lead to pupils learning independently and being more involved in their assessment
- strengthening the curriculum to give pupils a greater say in what they learn and more opportunities to develop their skills of literacy and numeracy in all subjects.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the procedures for monitoring to remove inconsistencies in progress and provision
 - extending the skills of staff and governors in managing change and in learning from others
 - developing a clear picture of the school's contribution to each element of community cohesion so that pupils have a clear understanding of the richness and diversity of modern society.
- Ensure that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have equal access to continuous provision in the outdoors.
- About 40% of 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**

Achievement and enjoyment are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in above average attendance. Pupils are willing and keen to learn and thrive when they have a say in their own learning. This was seen in a literacy lesson where pupils, knowing clearly what they needed to do to improve, motivated many to try even harder. Often, however, pupils lack a real interest in what they do and while working quietly, do so within themselves rather than pushing to do better. The variation in attitudes to learning is the consequence of differences in the quality of teaching.

Attainment is improving. Intervention strategies to improve reading, writing and mathematics are having a marked impact on attainment across the school. Given the starting points to Year 1, progress is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics and recovering after a period of decline. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good planning and support. They attain as well as similar pupils nationally and make good progress over time.

In subjects in which pupils excel, such as sport and music, confidence and enjoyment are evident. Where teaching is uninspiring and the curriculum lacks imagination pupils lack enthusiasm. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. With the exception of a small group of older boys, behaviour is good at all times and pupils say they feel safe. Regular access to outdoor physical activities and to healthy snacks

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and food, promotes a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Within the school, pupils make a positive contribution to managing the school as helpers and school councillors. Their contribution to the wider community is satisfactory. While pupils know and understand aspects of their local culture, their experience and knowledge of the cultural diversity of modern society are relatively underdeveloped. The development of good personal skills and adequate academic achievement prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

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 | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 |

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies from class to class. This is partly the result of unavoidable staff changes which have held back strategies to raise attainment and improve the use of assessment. While good assessment systems are in place, they are not consistently used to inform planning. In the best teaching the needs of different pupils are recognised and carefully planned for. Too often, however, pupils are expected to sit and listen for too long and the capabilities of the more able are underestimated, thus reducing progress. Marking also varies in quality. At its best, pupils know how well they

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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are doing and understand what to do to get better, but at times comments are too general and lack real guidance. There are some real strengths in the teaching of music and sport where key staff have considerable skills resulting in high levels of performance in each area.

The curriculum meets requirements. After a period of declining attainment, a renewed focus is being given to reading, writing and mathematics. This positive move has lifted the profile of basic skills across the school. The strategies to release pupils' imaginations and to enable them to apply such skills to a wide variety of subjects are yet to be fully developed. Good use of visits and visitors widens pupils' knowledge of the world beyond school to some extent, with the exception of understanding children of different cultures.

Everyone in the school cares very much about each pupil. Close links with a variety of educational and health agencies provide good support to vulnerable pupils and their families. These contribute to good levels of inclusion overall. Pupils are well prepared for moving onto the next stage of their education, with very effective links with the main feeder high school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The relatively new headteacher has stabilised the school successfully after a time of considerable change. There is a clear ambition to raise attainment and achievement. School development planning reflects a reasonable picture of where improvement is needed, but the pace of change has been rather slow in removing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. This has held back the full impact of good strategies to raise attainment in English and mathematics. The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunities although not all pupils get this, for example the more able could receive better support and do better. Effective strategies successfully manage any incidents of racism or discrimination.

The governing body, too, is undergoing change and has improved its effectiveness recently. Governors recognise the need to raise attainment. They ensure that the school meets requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection. The outdoor learning and play facilities are second to none, but some features of the buildings do not meet expected standards. Partnerships with local schools are strengthening and bring in benefits in terms of teaching and the curriculum. Improving partnerships with the local

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authority and other local primary schools make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching. The school successfully engages parents in school life with regular meetings, newsletters and an informative website. Cohesion within the local community is well promoted but is not as evident in the wider context of modern society. The school is taking effective steps to reign back on overspend within the budget.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Many children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with weaknesses in their spoken language and vocabulary. A well planned and monitored speech and language programme is used to develop in children the confidence to speak and converse with others. As a result they make good progress particularly in Nursery and, by the end of Reception, their attainment is typically average. Both classes are separately taught and suitably staffed. The benefits of managing both as a combined unit have not been taken. Opportunities for learning are generally well planned and enable children to make choices. Nursery children benefit from access to a very good quality outdoor learning area but this is not consistently available to the children in Reception. As a result, there is an inequality of access to outdoor learning between the Nursery and Reception. The assessment of children's progress is good; it is well supported by individual 'profile' booklets that contain photographs and notes on what each child has accomplished. The children are happy and well cared for. All aspects of their welfare are properly attended to. Statutory requirements are met despite the need for some elements of the accommodation to be upgraded.

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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 | 2 |
| 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

Around three quarters of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The large majority of parents and carers are very supportive and rate the school highly. They feel the school is caring and that it gives their children a good start to school life. A few have concerns about the behaviour of some older pupils and some are also concerned about the relatively high number of temporary staff in recent months. The inspectors agree that the school is very caring but findings show that academic attainment could be higher. Regarding behaviour, inspectors found that the large majority of pupils behave well, although a few older boys can be mildly disruptive. The staffing changes have been beyond the school's control and have contributed to uncertainty for some pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Askam Village 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 51 | 54 | 40 | 43 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 58 | 62 | 35 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 42 | 45 | 49 | 52 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 42 | 45 | 43 | 46 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 43 | 46 | 44 | 47 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 40 | 43 | 44 | 47 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 39 | 41 | 54 | 57 | 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) | 36 | 38 | 48 | 51 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 38 | 40 | 52 | 55 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 25 | 27 | 55 | 59 | 10 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 25 | 27 | 54 | 57 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 39 | 41 | 45 | 48 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 47 | 50 | 41 | 44 | 2 | 2 | 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). 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"> ■ 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.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Askam Village School, Askam-in-Furness, LA16 7DA

Thank you for spending time with my colleague and me during our recent visit. You told us that you enjoy school. Judging by your good attendance, smiling faces and friendliness, this is certainly the case. Your behaviour is generally good and you are generally polite and helpful. You have a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives and you willingly take on jobs to help others, for example as 'Sing up' leaders during play.

All adults are very caring and supportive of those of you who find aspects of learning difficult. Your performance in music and sport is quite exceptional, but here are some areas in which you could do better. I have asked the school to help you do better in English and mathematics by making sure the improvements the headteacher is making at the school happen more quickly, so that:

- all teaching is as good as that in the best lessons
- you all receive better guidance about how you can improve your work
- the curriculum is more interesting so that you are more inspired to learn
- you have more opportunities to learn about people different to yourselves.

You can all help to improve the school further by continuing to attend regularly and sharing your ideas with your teachers and staff.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead Inspector

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