

# Dalton St Mary's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112412
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	337928
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pat Kime HMI

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Alan Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan McWilliam
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Coronation Drive Dalton-in-Furness Cumbria LA15 8QR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and a governor. They observed the school's work, and examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including curricular planning, school improvement planning and data on pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors received responses to the inspection questionnaires from 50 parents, 35 staff and 107 Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in Key Stage 2
- how effectively the curriculum meets the needs of boys, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception)
- how effectively early literacy and numeracy skills are taught
- the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

## Information about the school

Dalton St Mary's CofE Primary School is an average sized school. The school serves an area of broadly average social and economic conditions which are reflected in the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The Year 4 and Year 6 teachers joined the school in September 2009 and, at the time of inspection, temporary teachers were covering maternity leave and staff absence in Years 1 and 2. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy School Award, Inclusion Charter Mark and the Becta ICT mark.

**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

This is a good school where pupils feel safe and enjoy learning in an encouraging atmosphere. They acquire the personal attributes and key skills necessary for the next stage of education. Teaching is predominantly good and, as a result, pupils are achieving well. Among the staff, there is much enthusiasm and determination to continue improving the school.

In the last two years attainment slipped to average in English and mathematics, and pupils who left the school in 2008 and 2009 had made only average progress in Key Stage 2. However, this dip was to a great extent the result of factors largely beyond the school's control. The current Year 6, a weaker year group, have done better in Key Stage 2 and are on course to reach similar standards to last year's leavers. This represents good achievement for these pupils. The quality of teaching is now good throughout this key stage and the school is well placed to build on recent improvements and raise attainment.

Children's starting point on entry to Nursery is a little below average overall but, for many, it is low in the skills needed for early reading, writing and mathematics. Children make at least good progress in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage with particularly good progress in some aspects of early literacy and numeracy. Nonetheless, by the end of Reception, children's attainment in writing and calculating is lower than expected for their age, particularly so for boys. Since September, staff have adapted their teaching to make the learning of these important skills more appealing to boys.

The curriculum is planned well to ensure pupils cover all that is required and tackle progressively more demanding work as they move up the school. Staff have begun systematic planning of opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills, especially writing, across subjects. The provision to develop pupils' cultural awareness and to promote community cohesion is satisfactory because, while pupils learn about the local community and study world faiths, opportunities for first-hand experiences of diversity are not extensive. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered at lunchtimes and after school.

Teaching is good overall, consistently so in Key Stage 2. There is also much good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff keep track of pupils' progress and teachers often use day-to-day assessment of learning well to influence future lessons. The marking of pupils' work is mainly good. The teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 is not always strong enough to promote rapid progress. The senior team reviews pupils' progress on a regular basis. They ensure that pupils who appear to be falling behind get

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additional help and this usually enables them to get back on track. However, the introduction of a simple and consistent whole-school system by which senior leaders might easily keep an overview of every pupil's progress towards challenging targets, is at an early stage of development.

There are many strengths in the leadership and management of the school, including governance. The senior team and the teachers are determined that pupils reach challenging targets and they are receptive to ideas that might help them realise their ambitions for pupils yet more successfully. However, a minority of the 35 staff who returned inspection questionnaires, though they know what the school is trying to achieve, do not feel involved or valued. The school's evaluation of its performance is, for the most part, accurate. Sound plans are in place, several already underway, to tackle areas which have been identified as priorities for development. These factors, along with the evidence of recovery in pupils' achievement and the commitment of the senior staff and teachers to continuing improvement, show the school's good capacity to improve.

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

- Consolidate and build on the recent improvement in pupils' achievement, particularly by:
  - raising attainment in early writing and calculation skills by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - ensuring consistently good teaching of phonic skills in Key Stage 1
  - raising attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Establish a clear and consistent whole-school system to keep track of each pupil's attainment and rate of progress.
- Ensure that all staff feel involved in what the school is trying to achieve and valued.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by providing a wider range of opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural, ethnic and social diversity in Britain and the wider world.

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

Attainment is broadly average. Pupils' academic progress is good overall from a starting point that, for many, is low in early literacy and numeracy skills. The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 fell in the last two years from its previously high level and pupils made only average progress in Key Stage 2. To a great extent this is explained by unavoidable disruption in teaching because of staff absence and, for last year's leavers, unusually high movement of pupils in and out of the school late in the key stage. The current Year 6 pupils have made good progress and, from a lower starting point at the end of Key Stage 1, they are on course for similar attainment to last year's leavers. At Key Stage 1, attainment is above average in literacy skills, particularly so in reading, and broadly average in mathematics. Pupils' work shows that they continue to make good progress in this key stage. Pupils with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities normally make good progress. There is a range of extra provision for them and most of the programmes are successful in boosting their progress.

In the large majority of lessons observed, pupils enjoyed learning, were attentive, tried hard at their work and supported each other. This confirms their very positive questionnaire responses about learning and enjoying school. At times, they made very good progress because they were greatly enthused by learning and concentrated intently, even when working with little direct supervision.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are considerate and courteous and the school is an orderly community. Some pupils and parents do not think behaviour is good but the inspection evidence does not support their views.

Discussions with pupils and parents and the responses to the inspection questionnaire confirm that pupils feel safe in school. A few of the younger pupils say that incidents of bullying do occur but they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Older pupils see much less sign of bullying. The school's response to incidents of bullying has been very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are well informed about the importance of diet and exercise in a healthy lifestyle and the school promotes this aspect of their personal development well, for example, by running a good number of sporting activities and a cookery club. Pupils are well prepared for the future because they develop good social skills and personal attributes, they establish a pattern of good attendance and punctuality and they reach expected standards in key skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>

<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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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The bulk of the teaching observed was good and an examination of pupils' work confirmed that this is typical for the school. Teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 2 and, on occasions, is very strong. Typically, staff have good, encouraging relationships with pupils and the work is appropriately challenging.

In the more effective of the lessons seen:

- pupils showed a strong commitment to achievement working purposefully and determinedly in groups and on their individual tasks
- teachers drew on good subject knowledge to explain difficult new work in ways pupils could grasp
- work was based on the teacher's in-depth knowledge of each pupil's learning
- teaching pushed on at a brisk pace that kept all pupils on their toes.

Where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of learning was slower and resources were not always well suited to the lesson content. The teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but the sessions seen were not lively enough to engage and enthuse all the pupils. Marking is generally good, particularly of writing. Teachers indicate how well pupils have achieved and they often add helpful pointers for the next steps in learning.

The school provides a good curriculum which covers all that is required and is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, a good number of visits and visitors, and good opportunities to contribute to community life. In all subjects, the work is planned to ensure progression and teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use and develop literacy and numeracy skills across subjects. Transition from Reception to Year 1 is managed effectively to ensure that pupils cover appropriate work for their level of attainment.

The school takes good care of its pupils and works in good partnership with other agencies to support those with additional needs. Extra help for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well targeted and of good quality. Parents told the inspectors that they value this greatly and it has a positive effect on their children's confidence and academic progress. Pupils' responses to the inspection questionnaire confirm that the large majority agree that they know how well they are doing and that the adults at school care about them and explain how to improve their work.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The staff, particularly the senior team and staff leading work in English and mathematics, are strongly committed to ensuring high quality provision that enables pupils to reach challenging targets. They have faced the recent slip in achievement squarely, analysed the reasons for it rigorously, and taken action to tackle the less strong areas in pupils' learning. The planning for improvement at whole-school level and for particular subjects is at least satisfactory and in some cases is good. Key staff monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching, consult teachers and provide good guidance for them. The teachers are keen; they undertake a good amount of additional training and apply it thoughtfully. Pupils' progress is checked frequently by the senior team and the data are used to guide decisions about the provision of extra help for pupils who could do better, thus ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities. Senior staff have begun work on devising a clearer system to provide an overview of pupils' progress towards targets. Despite opportunities for all staff to contribute to decisions about how to develop the school, the inspection questionnaires show that a minority of staff feel neither valued nor involved in what the school is trying to achieve.

The governing body makes a strong positive contribution to the school. Governors are involved well with staff, in school improvement planning and they balance good support with informed challenge. They know the school well.

The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to school life and they are involved in the local community. They learn about diversity in religious education and from some visitors to the school but, despite the largely mono-cultural nature of the school and the local area, limited opportunities are provided for pupils to engage with those from different backgrounds.

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements. Risk assessments are undertaken for activities on and off the premises. Risk assessments and policies relating to safeguarding are reviewed regularly by the governing body. A good range of provision, much of which involves representatives from other agencies, helps pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Questionnaire responses show that pupils and parents are confident in the safety of pupils at the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2



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<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from starting in Nursery to the end of Reception. Nonetheless, many start with weak skills in aspects of early literacy and numeracy and their attainment in writing and calculating lags behind other aspects of their learning; this is particularly so for boys. Children do well in other aspects of early literacy and numeracy, for instance counting and reading. Pupils develop a good degree of independence. They work and play together harmoniously and sustain concentration well.

Teaching is good and the curriculum is well organised to cover all requirements. A particular strength is the attention now given to teaching early literacy and numeracy skills in ways that appeal to boys, for example through outdoor games using numbers and phonics. The staff are always looking for ways to improve the provision.

Teamwork is strong with good liaison between Nursery and Reception and good deployment of teaching assistants to support children's learning.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The table below shows that most of the parents and carers who returned the inspection

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questionnaire are happy with the school and feel that their children enjoy school and are safe there. They are satisfied with the teaching and their children's progress. A small minority, however, feels that the school is not well led and managed, unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively and account is not taken of their suggestions and concerns. The inspectors considered these matters but found no evidence to support these concerns.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dalton St Mary's 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 inspector received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	51	23	43	2	4	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	20	38	29	55	4	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	36	27	51	6	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	34	28	53	6	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	42	24	45	6	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	40	23	43	8	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	36	31	58	3	6	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)	23	43	27	51	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	32	28	53	6	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	15	27	51	12	23	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	25	23	43	11	21	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	15	28	24	45	10	19	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	38	26	49	5	9	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"><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.**



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dalton St Mary's CofE Primary School, Dalton-in-Furness, LA15 8QR

You may remember that Mr Aziz, Mr Dower and I came to your school to see how well you are learning. Mrs Veall came with us to find out more about how schools are inspected. Thank you for welcoming us and for your contribution to the inspection. We learned a lot from seeing your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you and we learned about the school from the questionnaires that you and your parents completed. You go to a good school and we were pleased to see that you enjoy learning. You achieve well because the teaching is good. We saw some really good lessons. You have a good number of extra activities at lunchtimes and after school. Your school is on the up after two years when the test results slipped.

Mrs McWilliam, the staff and the governors all want to make your school even better. They have a good idea of what needs to be done. We agreed that the important things to concentrate on are:

- continuing to raise achievement, particularly in English and mathematics
- improving the way your progress is tracked so the senior staff have a clear overview of how well everyone is doing
- making sure that all the staff feel involved in helping to improve the school
- giving you more opportunities to learn about the lives and traditions of people from different backgrounds in Britain and the wider world.

For every one of you the challenge now is to always behave your best and do your best work and to do your bit to make sure everyone is happy at school. You have my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime

Her Majesty's Inspector

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