

Cockerton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114212
Local Authority	Darlington
Inspection number	338317
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	John Paddick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev R Wallace
Headteacher	Mr C Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2006
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 12 lessons and scrutinised a wide variety of examples of pupils' written work, especially in Years 5 and 6. Of the 10 teachers, excluding the headteacher, in school at the time of the inspection eight were observed in class, one was not timetabled to teach and one was not seen. Inspectors held meetings with governors, teachers and classroom assistants, and a group of pupils. They scrutinised the school's child protection and safeguarding documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, the school development plan and records of pupils' progress. They analysed 90 questionnaires from parents and carers, 120 from pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 10 from members of staff.

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

- current standards in Years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science
- pupils' progress in mathematics throughout the school
- progress being made by the more-able pupils
- the reasons for national test results being lower than at the time of the previous inspection in 2006.

Information about the school

Cockerton Primary School serves an area to the north west of Darlington town centre. It is of average size for a school of its type. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around 10%, which is below average. Fifteen per cent of the pupils on roll have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is a smaller-than-average proportion. A below-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is less than one per cent of the number on roll. The school has Artsmark Gold, ICT Mark and Activemark awards and has met the National Healthy School Standard.

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

Cockerton Church of England Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory and improving quality of education. The school has many good and outstanding features. An example is the way in which pupils respond so positively to the school's very strong Christian ethos. The school's self-evaluation procedures are effective in providing a basis for change and improvement. The school has attended effectively to the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in relation to provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the development of the use of computers across the curriculum. Since the last inspection, attainment declined from above average to average but is now rising again. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Most pupils are making satisfactory progress across a wide range of subjects and some are doing better than that. Current work in Year 6 is of an average standard, reflects the school's national test results of the last few years and represents satisfactory achievement. This year group is now successfully making up for some slow progress in the early years of the key stage, but the quality of pupils' writing is still below average. In most other year groups, progress is good and attainment is above average. However, there are still weaknesses in the performance of some of the school's more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils' attendance is high. They enjoy their education and display exceptionally good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. They respond extremely positively to the wide range of opportunities that the school provides, especially through exciting and valuable experiences in the outside areas and the large number of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have an extremely strong grasp of what healthy living involves and most are keen to eat and drink what is good for them and participate widely in sport.

Major weaknesses in teaching have recently been put right so that pupils are now making better progress. Lessons are at least satisfactory and frequently good, but there are still some further improvements that can be made, particularly in terms of pace and challenge. The school's assessment programme provides a clear and accurate picture of how quickly pupils are progressing. Good provision for care, guidance and support underpins the progress that pupils make, particularly in relation to their very good personal development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:

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- ensuring that pupils have consistently good teaching
- monitoring closely and supporting pupils who are not making enough progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, by:
 - making it a priority in the school development plan
 - monitoring it frequently and effectively so that weaknesses are eliminated and strong features are identified and promoted
 - ensuring that lessons fully challenge the school's more-able pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy their education and are keen to do well in lessons. They feel perfectly safe in school and say that staff deal well with any bullying on the very rare occasions that it occurs. Good attitudes and behaviour in lessons mean that the learning atmosphere in class is almost always good and frequently exceptional. This enables pupils to concentrate on their work without distraction. Maturity and very well-developed social skills contribute fully to the excellent relationships that pupils have with each other and the staff. Pupils benefit extremely well from the very wide range of opportunities to take responsibility within school and to participate in activities in the community. Examples include organising their own assemblies and Eucharist and becoming involved in a range of local environmental issues.

Attainment has dipped since the previous inspection but it is now recovering strongly, particularly in Years 4 and 5. In Year 6, attainment is average in number, below average in writing and above average in science. This represents satisfactory overall achievement since these pupils joined the school with broadly average skills levels. Learning and progress in the recent past has been very uneven throughout the school because of some weaknesses in the quality of teaching. However, matters have improved and almost all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and many are doing much better than that. Across all year groups, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently make good progress because they have good quality support.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

A good proportion of strong teaching is substantially improving the rate at which pupils are making progress in most year groups. Most lessons are now characterised by a good pace, a wide range of approaches and a variety of activities. Many teachers use creative methods to enable pupils to learn and consolidate skills while they are investigating sources of information and working in different subjects. Pupils enjoy this approach and are keen to talk about what they are doing. Usually, teachers use lesson time well, but occasionally the pace of learning slows when the more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged. There is still scope to give the older pupils more idea of how they are getting on by relating the work they are doing in class more firmly to their learning targets.

The curriculum has many strong features and provides most pupils with secure pathways to make at least satisfactory and frequently good progress in the development of their basic skills. It provides particularly well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is recognised as a local leader in the design of cross-curricular approaches to learning. These are evident in media studies lessons, for example, which very successfully engage pupils' interest.

Good care, guidance and support contribute very effectively to pupils' good and often outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils recognise that help is always on hand and that they will receive assistance when they need it. Good links with outside agencies provide several pupils with effective specialist help. Very good links with local secondary schools mean that pupils in Years 5 and 6 feel that they are well prepared and confident to transfer to the next phase in their education.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with good leadership. He expects high standards and challenges underperformance rigorously. However, there is still further scope for a more coherent approach to the monitoring and continuous improvement of teaching. Senior leaders are motivated to seek further improvement, but they are sometimes too focused on administrative aspects of their roles, rather than on supporting and improving teaching and learning.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strong features and they know what still needs to be improved. They challenge when they need to and offer advice when appropriate. The promotion of community cohesion is good because pupils have real responsibilities within school and the locality. They learn about the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom and have increasing direct links with people from other cultures both locally and globally. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory rather than good because the school can still do more to fully cater for its more-able pupils. There is no discrimination of any description because the school's procedures for tackling it are effective. All requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their learning and make good progress, often from starting points that are below the expectations for their age. A good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children provides many opportunities to investigate, explore, experiment and socialise in pairs and groups. Children soon learn how to form friendships and share. By the time they leave Reception, most children are reaching or exceeding almost all the nationally expected levels.

Children benefit from good teaching and they are confident and happy in the welcoming and safe environment that the school provides. Just occasionally, they become restless when speaking and listening activities go on for too long. Teaching assistants are well deployed and, very effectively, help to extend the quality of play and children's speaking and listening skills. Exceptionally meticulous assessment procedures mean that lessons consolidate and build securely upon the progress that children have previously made. Good leadership and management provide a shared vision for continuous change and improvement. Communication with parents and carers and their involvement in their children's learning and progress is good.

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

Parents and carers have positive views about the school. Given the recent improvements in teaching and learning, inspectors feel that these views are largely justified. In returning the questionnaires, several parents and carers took the time to add written comments explaining why they are pleased with many aspects of the school's provision for their children. Negative comments were very much in the minority. A minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not inform them about their children's progress. Inspectors actually found that keeping parents and carers informed is a strong feature of the school's work. For example, there are meetings every term for discussions with teachers about progress, annual reports, and open evenings for parents and carers to see pupils' work and discuss it. If parents and carers have concerns outside these sessions then teachers are happy to see them after lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cockerton Church of England 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	58	36	40	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	72	24	27	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	41	42	47	11	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	52	35	39	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	51	42	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	42	43	48	5	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	48	46	51	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)	28	31	53	59	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	48	39	43	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	31	53	59	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	33	50	56	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	48	45	50	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	53	38	42	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

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.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cockerton Church of England Primary School, Darlington, DL3 9EX

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the other inspector and me when we came to inspect your school recently. A particular thank you goes to those of you who filled in the questionnaires, met with us or answered our questions while you were working. We were particularly impressed by your behaviour and the fact that most of you really enjoy your education.

We found that Cockerton Church of England Primary is a satisfactory school with definite strengths in some of the teaching and the way that the staff go out of their way to help you. It certainly provides you with interesting things to learn about. The progress that many of you are making in lessons is better than it was. We were particularly pleased to learn that many of you take responsibility for assembly and for work in your local community.

The school could still improve further and we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to make some changes to enable some of you to make more progress. These are to:

- check lessons regularly to ensure that you are all learning as much as you can
- provide more difficult work for some of you in mathematics and writing so you reach higher standards than at present.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

John Paddick

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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