

INSPECTION REPORT

CATFORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119160

Headteacher: Mrs J Counsell

Reporting inspector: Mr P H Cole
2616

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th September 2002

Inspection number: 247972

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane
Catforth
Preston

Postcode: PR4 0HL

Telephone number: 01772 690451

Fax number: 01772 690451

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Davies

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Catforth Primary is a very small school with 41 pupils on roll. It serves a mixed community and its pupils come from a wide range of family backgrounds, though most parents are keen for their children to do well at school. Almost all the pupils are white and only one speaks a language other than English at home. Their knowledge, understanding and skills when they first come into school vary noticeably from year to year, as is often the case with very small numbers of pupils, and over time are similar to those found in most schools. There is, however, a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school than is usually found in schools nationally, and most of their needs are concerned with learning difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Lessons are mostly well taught and enable pupils to make good progress and to achieve well; their personal development is promoted effectively and the school takes good care of them. Sound leadership and management enable the school to provide satisfactory value for money, despite the relatively high costs typically found in small schools.

What the school does well

- Ensures that pupils make good progress as result of effective teaching.
- Encourages its pupils to be very well behaved, to develop very positive attitudes and values and to be caring and thoughtful.
- Looks after its pupils well.
- Enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
- Gains exceptionally high levels of parental approval.

What could be improved

- There are no significant weaknesses for the school to address.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1998, standards have improved in mathematics and in information and communication technology (ICT) and remained as strong in other subjects as they were. The clear weaknesses identified last time in pupils' learning in ICT have been tackled well and standards are now comfortably in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Governors have better working practices through the committees they have established, but could be more involved in looking at and judging how well the school is doing. The learning environment has benefited from the refurbishment and redecoration of the building and the purchase of new furniture and equipment. Problems still remain in providing for physical education because of need to use the hall as a classroom. However, the governors have plans for a new classroom and are building up reserves to fund this. Overall, satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

Because of the small numbers of pupils tested at the end of Years 2 and 6, it is not possible to compare their results with those found nationally, or with those gained by pupils in schools that have a similar entitlement to free school meals. The progress that individual pupils have made has been measured by comparing what they knew and could do when they first came into school, to what they achieved in the Years 2 and 6 national tests. When their starting points were taken into account, last year's Year 2 pupils achieved well. Year 6 pupils, who were tested in 2002, made better than expected gains in mathematics and achieved as well as could have been expected in English. The standard of their completed work reflects these results. When the school's results in national tests are averaged out over several years, to even out the inevitable variations that are found when small numbers of pupils are tested, they are higher than usual. Given the pupils' starting points, this represents good progress. As in many schools, boys have tended to do less well in the Year 2 tests than girls. Results, along with the standards seen, in reading are better than in writing. The school has identified this difference. Although it has become a focus for teaching, opportunities are still being missed to improve pupils' writing skills and, for example, errors in punctuation still persist. The pupils' work in other subjects indicates that standards are comfortably in line with the national expectations. Children in the reception year have settled into school quickly, are making good progress and are on course to achieve the learning goals that are identified for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive; pupils clearly enjoy being in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and during break times.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on very well with each other and willingly accept responsibilities and show initiative, for example caring for the garden areas.
Attendance	Very good, well above average.

These very positive judgements reflect the caring ethos and the strong family atmosphere in the school and provide a very firm foundation on which teaching and learning can be built.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall, teaching is good. It is consistently good for children in reception and Year 1 and at least satisfactory in other classes, where good lessons are also taught, particularly in Years

2 and 3. Teachers benefit from having small classes, but have to meet the different learning needs of at least two year groups in each class. They pitch lessons at suitable levels and modify tasks to suit different ages and abilities, when this is appropriate. Teaching is satisfactory in literacy and good in numeracy. Occasionally, more could be asked of older pupils in the junior class, for example by giving them more challenging writing tasks in literacy lessons. The pace of learning for pupils in the junior class is reduced when they are expected to queue to see the teacher, for example to have work marked, and this limits what they achieve in some lessons. Strengths found across the school include the very good relationships that teachers have established with their classes. These successfully develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Learning objectives for lessons are usually clear and lead to purposeful and well-focused teaching and learning. Resources are used thoughtfully and help to make teachers' explanations clear and meaningful to pupils. Classroom helpers are almost always used effectively, particularly to support pupils with special educational needs. This support ensures that these pupils can take a full part in lessons and helps them to work successfully towards the targets that are set for them. The marking of work, mainly for pupils in Years 2 to 6, is not as effective as it could be. It is done regularly, encourages pupils, but includes few points for development that would help them to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactorily broad and balanced, and enriched by opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to be involved in environmental work and business and enterprise activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, and enables these pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Effective. One pupil speaks English as an additional language and is able to take a full part in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good, overall, with very good provision made for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well.

All staff know the pupils very well and care for them as individuals. There are good arrangements for ensuring their safety, including, for example, clear guidance on using the Internet. Careful checks are made on how well individuals are learning and this information is used to help ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress. Parents are exceptionally positive about the school and of how well it provides for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	A high teaching commitment leaves the headteacher with very little time to devote to leadership and management. Despite this, she successfully maintains a very positive school ethos and strong teamwork amongst staff, and manages the school satisfactorily.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are appropriately involved in planning developments and have a sound understanding of how well the school is working. They still need to develop their roles as 'critical friends' to the school in order to provide more challenge and to help it improve further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. Results and test information are taken into consideration when identifying priorities, and teaching is monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory.

The school makes sound use of the principles of best value when making decisions about school developments and when planning how funds will be used to benefit the pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, enjoy lessons and are eager to attend. • Behaviour is very good and the children are developing positive attitudes and values. • Their children make good progress because they are well taught. • They are kept well informed about how well their children are doing and what is happening in school. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no aspects of the school's life that parents thought were in need of any significant improvement.

The inspectors agree with the first four statements. The school is led and managed satisfactorily because the headteacher has a high teaching commitment and little time to devote to management.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress as result of effective teaching.

1 All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and a high proportion of lessons were taught well. Many of the strengths in teaching are consistently found across the school. Teachers take full advantage of the small classes they teach to get to know pupils well. They are very careful to record what pupils have learnt and if they have problems as individuals. They use this information when talking to pupils about their work. It is not yet feeding clearly enough into the targets that are set for pupils, as these tend to be quite general rather than linked closely to what individual pupils need to do to improve. Teachers' knowledge of individuals enables them to manage behaviour very well and to motivate pupils, and underpins the very positive relationships found in each class. Teachers create good conditions for successful learning.

2 Lessons are planned effectively. They have clear objectives that lead to focused teaching and clear explanations of new learning. Teachers almost always take effective account of the learning needs of different groups, such as year groups and pupils with special educational needs, and this enables pupils to learn what is appropriate for them. Very good use is made of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and to make learning more meaningful. For example, in a very well taught history lesson the older pupils in school gained very good insights into what life was like in schools in the past through their investigation of old log books and inspection reports! The youngest pupils in school successfully developed their observational and recording skills in science when they were given a good range of different materials to explore with their senses. Teachers use questioning well to successfully encourage pupils to think through their ideas. This was seen in a top infant and lower junior literacy lesson when the teacher's questioning successfully extended pupils' comprehension skills and their understanding of alliteration.

3 The pace of most lessons is good and leads to pupils working productively. Time in lessons for the older pupils is sometimes wasted when they have to queue to see the teacher and this can limit what they achieve in a lesson. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and comments made by teachers in pupils' books are encouraging, but more could be done to point out to pupils what they need to do make their work even better. The quality of work on display around the school and in pupils' books shows that teachers have high expectations, to which pupils respond well and points clearly to effective teaching across all subjects.

Encourages its pupils to be very well behaved, to develop very positive attitudes and values and to be caring and thoughtful

4 All the teachers foster warm sympathetic relationships successfully and have high expectations of how pupils will behave. This sets and maintains a positive and productive ethos in classrooms, where pupils feel they are respected and valued. As a result, teachers develop pupils' positive self-esteem and self-confidence well. They help pupils to understand the value of getting on well with each other and the need to concentrate on the tasks in hand. In all of the lessons that were observed, pupils were very well behaved and no examples of inappropriate behaviour were witnessed.

5 Pupils listen closely to what their teachers and the helpers in the classes say to them. This is because the teachers set and maintain clear routines. They do not interrupt and even

the youngest take turns to answer questions and enter into discussions with 'talking partners' without any fuss. When there is potential for pupils to misbehave, for example when the older juniors are queuing to see their teacher as they finish their work, they do not do so. They wait patiently and do not interfere with what others are doing. The same pupils co-operate and sustain tasks well, for example when they are researching and developing joint presentations of what they have found out in geography. Older infant and younger junior pupils contribute their opinions confidently and show respect for others' views, for example when they are discussing what it is to show commitment in a religious education lesson. Across the school, pupils show interest in what they are doing and clearly enjoy lessons.

6 Pupils demonstrate caring attitudes and thoughtfulness. The older ones do not need to be encouraged to look after the younger ones during break times. They organise impromptu games and sit and talk to their younger friends. Pupils' thoughtfulness and care was shown very well when one of the older junior boys noticed the plant tubs and the chequer board garden were very dry. Without being asked, he fetched the watering can and spent his lunchtime ensuring all the necessary watering was done.

Looks after its pupils well

7 One of the school's major strengths is the family atmosphere that it creates. All adults know the pupils really well and are sensitive to their needs and to their individual personalities. As described above, they build positive relationships that ensure that the pupils feel secure and valued.

8 In addition to the care and affection that adults in the school show towards pupils, there are well-established policies and procedures that ensure their safety and welfare. Arrangements for child protection are good. Appropriate risk assessments are made to minimise the likelihood of any accidents, for example on school journeys, and there are clear and sensible procedures that pupils understand and follow to prevent them coming to harm when using the Internet.

9 Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning in English and mathematics and modify what they teach in order to tackle any weaknesses that become evident. This approach has been enhanced recently by the introduction of targets for improvement that individual pupils can work towards in order to make their own learning more successful. Pupils are coming to see the value in these and how they can help them to get better at what they are doing. The marking of the work of older infant and junior pupils is not as effective as it might be. It makes a limited contribution to pupils' knowledge of how they can improve, mainly because it is not sufficiently focused on the targets that have been set. Assessments of how well pupils are learning are also made in all other subjects and detailed records kept of what they have achieved in them. These provide a detailed picture of where pupils are in their learning. Careful checks are made of the progress that pupils with special educational needs are making. These are used well to identify what needs to be done next to help these pupils to learn more. Care is taken to ensure that parents are fully involved in this process. As a result, these pupils almost always make good progress in tackling their particular difficulties.

Enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress

10 The school has more pupils with special educational needs than would normally be expected for its size. This reflects the well-founded confidence that parents have in the school and the success it enjoys in helping these pupils. Several factors contribute to this success. Classes are small and this enables teachers to get to know all pupils well as individuals and to provide them with much additional support. This benefits all pupils, but

particularly those with special needs. This individual attention, together with the positive caring relationships that exist between adults and pupils, builds their confidence and their feelings of personal worth and forms a secure basis for their development. The pupils' learning needs are identified clearly. Individual learning plans are realistic and used effectively to target support and to plan their work and the strategies for helping them. Both specialists and any available adult helpers are used well to support and guide pupils with special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs makes a very strong personal commitment to her responsibilities. She is unusually well informed about the provision made in school and provides very valuable practical support in helping to deliver it.

Gains exceptionally high levels of parental approval

11 The school has a very strong reputation locally. It is regarded as a good school that cares for its pupils very well. It attracts pupils from an area much wider than it would normally be expected to serve. This reputation, most particularly for the looking after and nurturing of its pupils, is well deserved. Through the survey of their views and at the well-attended meeting before the inspection, parents expressed their considerable satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school's life. There were no areas of any significance that parents thought were in need of improvement. This level of parental approval reflects a number of the school's strengths. Teachers go out of their way to be very approachable, helpful and friendly, and parents appreciate this. The school provides very high levels of care. Parents have experienced this, and are impressed, for example, by the way their children's special educational needs are met, or the way the school has dealt with any problems that individual pupils may have had. Parents are given good information about what is happening in the school and about what their children will be learning. Reports on pupils' progress provide a clear picture of individuals' strengths and weaknesses, and what they need to do to improve, and parents appreciate these. Almost without exception, their children tell them that they enjoy school. This is reflected in the very good levels of attendance and again reflects the school's success in making pupils feel valued and part of a large, caring family.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

12 There are no significant weaknesses that need to be improved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

13 Minor weaknesses that the governors, headteacher and staff may wish to tackle are referred to in the report.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	11
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	7	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	9	64	27	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than nine percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	41
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	4.2	School data	0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	40
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Average class size	14

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	156,154
Total expenditure	149,836
Expenditure per pupil	3,654
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,370
Balance carried forward to next year	54,885

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

40

Number of questionnaires returned

21

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	10	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	86	5	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	86	14	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	62	38	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	86	14	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	76	19	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	95	5	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	95	5	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	86	14	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	19	14	5	14