



Levens Church of England School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112262
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278885
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Levens
School category	Voluntary controlled		Kendal
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cumbria, LA8 8PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01539 560694
Number on roll	89	Fax number	01539 560694
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ray Gillard
Date of previous inspection	1 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr Roger Shone

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 21 March 2006 - 22 March 2006	Inspection number 278885
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Levens Primary School is a small school but numbers have grown to around 90 in the last few years. It is situated just outside Kendal in the rural village of Levens. The surrounding areas are characterised by private property and established communities. No children speak English as an additional language. The percentage of children eligible for a free school meal is below that in most schools. The school has an average number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When children start school they have broadly average skills.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The inspector confirms the school's judgements about its overall effectiveness and that each aspect of its performance is good. Children are happy here and the school has the full support of parents. The care, support, guidance and personal development of children are good. The school's provision for children to develop healthy lifestyles is outstanding, and it promotes children's well-being effectively through good links with organisations such as the National Trust.

Children make good academic progress and all achieve well. This begins in the Foundation Stage (Reception class), where they are given an outstanding range of learning opportunities. From a broadly average start, children exceed national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Good improvements have been made to ensure that higher attaining children achieve well in English, but these need to be consolidated and extended. The school rightly expects to achieve its demanding targets in English and mathematics this year. The curriculum is good and offers an outstandingly rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities.

The quality of teaching and learning is good but teachers do not always insist that children present their work well. Parents are informed and consulted regularly and children's opinions are valued. The school is led and managed well and social inclusion is outstanding. The headteacher and governors have high expectations and ensure that the school provides good value for money. The capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the measures taken to ensure that higher attaining children in Years 3 to 6 achieve as well as they can in English.
- Ensure that children present their written work well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well and reach their demanding targets. There is no evidence of underachievement. One parent commenting about her child's progress wrote, 'her teachers encourage her to work to her full potential'. Children's good skills in reading, calculation, science and information and communication technology (ICT) equip them well for future learning. Weaknesses in writing for higher attainers have been addressed so that these pupils now achieve well. However, these improvements need to be embedded. Standards are well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English by the time children leave the school.

Children get off to a good start in Reception. When they begin school, their skills and knowledge are broadly average for their age. Good teaching gives them an outstanding range of worthwhile practical learning experiences to consolidate and extend their

learning. By the time they enter Year 1, children exceed the standards expected. They maintain this good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. They work hard to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding, and achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. They enjoy school and feel safe and happy. Attendance is typical of that seen in most primary schools. Behaviour is good; relationships are very good and children trust their teachers and classroom assistants. They grow in maturity and responsibility as they move up the school. For example, members of the school council bring up ideas to improve the school and plan to use 'their' budget to enhance playground provision. Children have good attitudes to school but they do not always take a pride in the way they present their work. They develop good attitudes in response to the school's strong emphasis on healthy eating, being safe and citizenship. Outstanding examples of this work are the quality of healthy food offered at lunchtimes, the promotion of healthy food in the school's tuck shop, and the many opportunities provided for children to take part in sporting activities.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The moral and social aspects are the strongest. Children clearly understand how to treat others fairly. Links with the locality, including the National Trust, are very strong. The school recognises the importance of multicultural education and has improved this aspect of its provision; for example, by making contact with an inner-city multicultural school in Preston. Children's good progress in learning the basic skills does much to ensure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. One parent commented, 'it's a wonderful school with a fantastic staff that provides my child with a fun, well- balanced, safe and inclusive education'. Teachers give children clear information, time limits and challenging work to do. The recent introduction of written targets for children to achieve has improved the quality of learning because children are clear about what they need to do to improve. When teaching is occasionally less successful, teachers assume that, because one or two children provide the right answers, other children really understand. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to teaching and learning, especially for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Classroom routines are well established and relationships are very good. Consequently, pupils work hard, but they do not always produce neat work and teachers fail to deal with this issue. Teachers provide interesting things for pupils to do. This was seen in

the Reception class when children were wonderfully enthusiastic about performing their version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. They enjoyed the experiences on offer, including the opportunity to 'rest' in one of seven beds! Teachers' effective use of interactive whiteboards in lessons supports the clear explanations given. The school uses good assessment procedures to identify needs, inform planning and set individual targets, and to monitor progress in the core subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, with outstanding opportunities for enrichment. The needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully monitored and well met, as are those of all other children. The curriculum for all pupils is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Provision for children's personal, health and sex and relationships education is good. There is a good emphasis on children acquiring the core skills of literacy and numeracy, but other subjects are not neglected. Children have good opportunities to develop their writing skills but this work needs to be embedded further into the curriculum by ensuring that writing is used well in all subjects. Children enjoy and learn from the outstanding variety of visits and visitors, sports, arts' events, performances, competitions and clubs that the school provides. For example, during the two days of the inspection, an author worked with children, children took part in a cross-country event, and younger children visited the local church. The school is rightly proud that almost 30 children are learning to play the violin. Staff constantly seek new approaches to the curriculum to improve learning. The school has a good range of resources and has adapted the accommodation well to suit children's needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for children are good. The school works hard and successfully at developing each child as an individual, and inclusion is a strength of provision. Children's self-esteem and confidence are developed well. The procedures for safeguarding children are robust, as are risk assessments. The school works closely with families to promote good attendance, and has strong links with the community. Children are given responsibility for aspects of school life, such as running the school's healthy tuck shop. Children say they enjoy serving on the school council.

The school has good systems for tracking and monitoring children's progress in English, mathematics and science, but less so in other subjects. Teachers are aware of the level of each child's work and use marking well to provide written pointers for improvement. They give good guidance for progress, and all staff support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher, through his good leadership, makes sure that everyone is involved in making the school a better place and an environment where everyone is valued and able to succeed. The governors are closely involved in the work of the school and carry out their duties well. All staff work effectively as one team to provide a very good environment for children's learning. However, the success in developing children's writing skills is not celebrated in the quality of work on display. Subject leadership and management and the management of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have recently been re-organised and are satisfactory overall. The school has the confidence of parents and children and consults them fully. Its self-evaluation is accurate. Inspector and school were in close agreement about strengths and areas for development. The school has grown in size since the previous inspection but has fully maintained its success. It has a good capacity for further improvement. One parent perhaps sums up all parents' views, 'we cannot think of a better school that brings the best out of each child. All in all we think Levens School is wonderful'.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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The Children

Levens C of E School

Levens

Kendal

Cumbria

LA8 8PU

24 March 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for helping me during the inspection. I would like to tell you about my findings. You will not be surprised to know that I found your school to be good with some outstanding features. I enjoyed being with you, watching you learn and talking to you. The list below shows some of the many things I liked about your school.

You work hard and do well in the yearly tests.

You have a very good understanding of the need to stay healthy.

You enjoy coming to school.

You like your teachers and classroom helpers and the way they make learning fun.

You have a good school council that has an outstanding chairman!

Teachers expect you to behave well and work hard. All the adults in school work very hard to care for you.

You enjoy the visits you make to different places and the sports and clubs after school.

I have asked your teachers to look at two things to make your school even better.

To make sure the work you do is presented as neatly as possible.

To provide you with plenty of opportunities to use and develop your writing skills well.

Yours truly

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector