



St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112305
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278896
Inspection dates 14 February 2006 to 15 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Drovers Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Penrith
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cumbria, CA11 9EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01768 242170
Number on roll	115	Fax number	01768 242171
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Brooks
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Richard Gaizely

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average and is organised into four classes, three of which are mixed age. Most children are white British, with less than 5% from minority ethnic groups. The school's population fluctuates quite a little each year because of the high proportion of Traveller children who attend the school from time to time. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average and there are three pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is higher than average. There is one child who has English as an additional language and is able to learn through English. The attainment of children when they join the school varies considerably from year to year, from above average to below average. The school holds a School Achievement Award, the Investors in People Award and the Kitemark Accreditation for the Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it might reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards in Year 2, and the leadership and management of the school.

The inspector disagrees with the school's judgement that it is satisfactory and judges it to be inadequate because of the underachievement of a significant group of pupils in Years 1 and 2. In view of this, the school gives inadequate value for money. However, elsewhere in the school pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in their learning. By Year 6, pupils reach standards that are close to average. They achieve well and make good progress because they work hard, teaching is good and is based on a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, with older pupils keen to take on responsibilities that help the school run smoothly. The attendance of a small number of pupils is poor. The inspector agrees with parents that pupils are well cared for. Guidance and support for pupils' learning are good in the juniors but inadequate in the infants because not enough use is made of information about pupils' learning to provide the correct level of challenge for all pupils. Standards and the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage are good, giving pupils a good start to their education. Leadership and management of the school are inadequate because there has not been enough monitoring of standards and provision in the infants in the last term to identify the underachievement of pupils. In addition, recent disruption to staffing has meant that the quality of education has not been monitored closely enough. The distribution of management responsibilities is uneven and places too many responsibilities on the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Governors are supportive of the school but have too little first hand knowledge to be able to respond promptly to difficult situations as they arise. The school is judged to have made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Although there was good improvement to standards in Year 2 until this year, and improvement in ICT has been good, recent circumstances have caused the school to decline. However, the school has the capacity both to correct current weaknesses and continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for pupils in Year 2, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by redistributing roles and responsibilities so that all staff have a manageable workload.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils whose attendance is poor so that they are able to make steady gains in their learning and achieve as well as other children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall, though there is some underachievement in one class. Results in Year 6 national tests last year showed that two-thirds of the pupils made better than expected progress from their starting points at the end of Year 2. Most pupils now in Year 6 have made good progress since they were in Year 2, and all are on course to reach the challenging targets set for them. While the school's performance in tests has declined over the last five years, this reflects the different capabilities of each group, all of whom made satisfactory progress up to the tests. Although few children from the Traveller community reach the expected standard by Year 6, the school's records show that they make satisfactory progress during their time in school. The performance of Year 2 pupils in national tests improved significantly since the previous inspection up to last year, when it was above average. However, a significant proportion of pupils now in Year 2 are underachieving and are at risk of not reaching the expected standard in the national tests this year because they are not currently making enough progress. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points, which vary each year. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported to make the same progress as their peers in all classes. A small number of pupils underachieve because their attendance is poor.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils accept responsibility willingly, so that by Year 6 they are able to fulfil their roles in supporting the school community well. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to make improvements to the school, though these could be extended given the capabilities and enthusiasm of the older pupils. Pupils' behaviour is very good in the juniors where it supports good learning. In the infants, behaviour is satisfactory, with occasional fussiness from some pupils slowing the learning of others. Pupils adopt healthy eating habits and are keen to participate in sport and fitness activities run by the school. By Year 6 pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their education. Attendance is well below average, despite the good attendance of most pupils, because of the poor attendance of a minority of pupils and the mobility of Traveller families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall because a significant group of pupils are not currently making adequate progress. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, good teaching is based on sharp knowledge of the pupils' needs. In these classes, work is well adapted to meet the needs of different groups and pupils

are all well challenged both by the teaching and the tasks that are set. In Years 3 to 6, learning in both English and mathematics is enjoyed by pupils of all abilities because the teaching is well paced, lively and uses a good range of methods. In Years 1 and 2, teaching does not take enough account of the different abilities of pupils and is not challenging enough, especially for the most capable pupils. The result is that a significant group of pupils underachieve. There is an over-reliance on worksheets in all subjects in this class, which hampers the development of pupils' basic skills. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported to learn as well as others in their classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It provides a sound base for the development of the interests and talents of pupils and is suitably adapted for pupils with learning difficulties. It is not used successfully in the infants to provide work that promotes a good quality of learning in reading, writing and mathematics. The provision for out of school clubs is good and these are well supported by pupils of all ages. Pupils say they enjoy the visitors who come to the school to share their expertise and were particularly enthusiastic about the recent visit from the Birds Of Prey Centre. There is well planned provision for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles and for discussion of issues that concern them, especially in the older classes. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well planned to match the needs of different pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's arrangements for health and safety and child protection are satisfactory. Care is good, because teachers and all adults in the school have good relationships with the pupils. Parents agree that care is good and they are happy their children are well looked after. Year 6 Buddies give most children a sense of security in the playground, though a few younger children would like better rules for the playground to protect them from some boisterous play. Support and guidance for pupils' learning varies. It is good in Years 3 to 6 where tracking of progress leads to well matched learning for pupils. In the infants, information is not well used, so that there is not a good match of tasks to pupils' needs. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory, while that for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is good, ensuring that these children are able to learn alongside their peers. Despite the school's robust efforts to improve attendance, improvement is very slow.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management in the school are inadequate because they have failed to identify the weaknesses in provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Senior staff have too little time for oversight of the work of the school and, owing to recent unavoidable

senior staff absence, monitoring the quality of education in Years 1 and 2 was deferred to this term. This has had serious consequences for standards in the infants, where there is now a significant amount of underachievement. Responsibilities for managing the school are not distributed evenly among staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher fulfil too many subject leadership roles compared with other staff making their workloads difficult to manage. While governors give good support to the school, their knowledge of it relies too heavily on the headteacher's reports, making it difficult for them to respond when challenging situations arise, for example when senior staff are absent and the resulting effect on the work of the school. Because of current weaknesses, the school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection, though it has the capacity to make the necessary improvement to ensure that good standards are restored in the infants.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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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Mr Richard Gaizely

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

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16 February 2006

Dear Children,

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit very much and would like to share with you some of the things I liked best about your school.

It was good to see how hard you work and how well you work together to help each other.

I think that older pupils behave very well in class and around the school. You set a good example to younger pupils. Keep it up!

It was good to see in most classes that you take responsibility for keeping the classroom well organised and tidy up well at the end of lessons. Perhaps younger children could do more of this.

I agree with the Year 6 pupils who think that you could manage more responsibility. You are mature and sensible young people and have plenty to offer the school.

I think you express your views well and that you have many good ideas that you could share with the school council. I agree with those of you who think it would be a good idea to look at playground rules.

To help things get even better in your school I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help children in Years 1 and 2 to learn better. I have also asked them to help those children who don't come to school as often as the rest of you to get into school more often so they can enjoy the good things that the rest of you do.

Thank you again for lovely welcome you gave me.

Best wishes for the rest of the year.

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

(Lead inspector)