

Caldew Lea School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112237
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289212
Inspection dates	19–20 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Craig McDougall
Headteacher	Mr Ian Johnston
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002
School address	Ashley Street Carlisle Cumbria CA2 7BE
Telephone number	01228 607538
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a residential district with above average levels of social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but there is a high percentage of pupils with statements of educational need. The school suffered fire damage during the summer of 2006 and has had to operate with some temporary accommodation since then.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Caldew Lea Primary is a good school and provides good value for money. The strong, enthusiastic leadership of the new headteacher and the resilience and professional integrity of all staff have ensured that the school has come through a period of challenge successfully. It is continuing to sustain good progress since the last inspection and is, therefore, in good shape to improve further.

Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. Improved provision in the Foundation Stage means that children make good progress from low starting points and now tend to reach all of the goals expected of five year olds by the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory because teaching is satisfactory and standards are below average. Between Years 3 and 6, teaching is good overall and so pupils make good progress and standards are usually average in all subjects.

Teaching is good overall. In all classes, there is a positive atmosphere where pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. Teachers explain new learning well, ask good questions and involve teaching assistants fully. Teaching is more effective in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, because teachers ensure work is challenging and well suited to the needs of pupils, and because the pace of learning is usually brisk. The curriculum provides a solid framework for learning and is well enriched by many extra activities. However, there is not enough promotion of basic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy, through all subjects.

Pupils also achieve well in their personal development. They are open, friendly and get on well together. They behave well, especially in lessons, although sometimes their behaviour outside is inappropriate. Some parents have concerns about this, but pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for at all times because the school deals efficiently with any incident. Inspectors endorse the pupils' view. Pupils have good attitudes to work, cooperate well in lessons and appreciate teachers' helpful advice. However, they do not have enough scope to find things out and learn for themselves. They are increasingly aware of the need to lead a safe, healthy and responsible lifestyle. The good work of the school council typifies their sense of citizenship. Their preparation for life ahead is satisfactory.

According to one parent, the headteacher has brought 'a sense of vibrancy' to the school. Other parents echo this view. His thoughtful and decisive leadership has enthused staff and governors, so that they all share a common purpose and are eager to improve. Closer links with parents and more training for staff and governors are good examples of initiatives that are beginning to raise standards further and improve the school. Whilst the school has a fairly accurate view of itself, its plans for development are insufficiently rigorous and objective. Governors are beginning to play an important role in development planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school's development is monitored and evaluated with sufficient analysis and rigour.
- Raise standards and increase the rate at which pupils make progress in Key Stage 1 by improving the quality of teaching.
- Maximise opportunities in all subjects to promote pupils' basic skills and to strengthen their independent learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are average by Year 6. They enter the nursery with skills and abilities well below those typical of children of this age, especially in language development, personal and social skills. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most children reach the early learning targets by the end of Reception. Improved teaching has recently helped to boost attainment.

Standards in Year 2 are below average, which reflects recent national assessment results. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2. Standards have not improved in Key Stage 1 because there is insufficient good teaching to increase the rate at which pupils make progress in lessons.

In Year 6, results in national tests have been average in English, mathematics and science in recent years. The school's data and inspection evidence indicates similar standards for pupils in the current Year 6 because they make good progress in lessons. Pupils usually achieve well in the national tests because pupils build well on their earlier learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and all other groups of pupils make comparable progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They enjoy coming to school because, as one pupil said, 'We learn new things and make friends'. Their attendance has improved but is still slightly below average. Behaviour is good. Pupils insist that disruptive behaviour in the playground by a minority of pupils is rare and promptly dealt with. Pupils, particularly older pupils, have good attitudes to work and work well co-operatively. Satisfactory literacy, numeracy and technical skills provide a sound basis for their future well-being.

Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe and healthy. They have been instrumental in improving healthy choices in snacks sold in the mornings. They value the opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities; for example, the choir performs at venues in the locality. Pupils are proud to act as buddies and to serve on the school council; they were particularly keen to explain how they help new pupils to settle in. Pupils initiate ideas for raising money for good causes such as the Air Ambulance service.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and enable pupils to make good progress. There are strengths throughout all key stages but in particular in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Good relationships between pupils and adults produce positive attitudes in lessons and ensure that little time is wasted. Pupils benefit from clear objectives so they know exactly what they need to learn. Teachers use questioning shrewdly to assess learning and to plan tasks that are usually matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Interactive whiteboards are used well to arouse interest and extend learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils who need extra help with their learning. In Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are sometimes

good, but are essentially satisfactory, as is progress. This is because the pace of lessons and, therefore, of learning is steady rather than brisk. Pupils are not consistently challenged or stimulated enough. Throughout the school, pupils have insufficient opportunities for independent learning, because teachers often direct learning too much. Marking provides encouragement and sometimes gives pupils clear advice on how to improve but is not consistently effective in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables pupils to make a positive start to their schooling. All pupils are fully included in the curriculum, especially pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose individual work plans are well focused and address their needs. The curriculum is well enriched by many interesting visits and visitors linked to class learning. In sport, especially, there is plenty of variety and the school is very successful in local competitions.

There is a positive emphasis on the main subjects of literacy and numeracy but provision is variable. Some teachers provide ample scope for pupils to develop skills, such as writing, through other subjects, but such activities are not consistently planned for throughout the school. In some year groups, especially in Key Stage 1, the pupils' work is often reliant on worksheets. This does little to inspire pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school is a welcoming place where pupils feel safe and well cared for. There are good procedures for safeguarding pupils, including child protection. Pupils are assessed effectively when they enter school so that staff know their particular needs. There are effective links with outside agencies to give specialist support, as well as with parents. Teachers have a good range of strategies to encourage good behaviour and perseverance. Pupils and parents appreciate the approachability of staff.

Although the school is about to change its systems of tracking pupils' progress, the information they have is good and enables staff to identify pupils who may be underachieving and need extra help. Targets to help pupils improve their work are satisfactory but inconsistent because teachers adopt different approaches. However, the quality of advice in lessons is valued by pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed overall. The leadership is good. In his short time in post, the new headteacher has recognised the school's strengths and has good ideas for further development. His clear-sighted, down-to-earth and affable approach has motivated and pleased pupils, staff, governors and parents alike. His sensible vision for the school is shared by staff and governors. He is well supported by senior staff and subject leaders, who are fully involved in the school's development. The management of the school is satisfactory. It runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, despite the temporary accommodation. It has a broadly accurate view of itself but does not analyse areas of concern with sufficient objectiveness and rigour. As a

result, its plans for improvement, although worthy, are not comprehensive enough and not linked clearly enough to the impact on pupils' achievement. In addition, the systems for monitoring the school's activities are new and not fully operational.

Governance is satisfactory but improving. Spurred by the enthusiasm of the headteacher and chairman, governors are eager to develop their role by seeking training, being more proactive in the school's development and becoming more of a 'critical friend'. Finances are healthy and have enabled the school to take advantage of the refurbishment to improve classrooms and the reception area. Parents praise the school, especially its ethos, the pupils' progress and the approachability of staff. 'It is not simply a school but a caring community,' typifies the view of many.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caldew Lea School, Cumbria, CA2 7BE

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you; your comments were very useful in helping us get to know your school.

We believe, like you, that yours is a good school. You achieve well because you have good teachers who expect you to work hard. Standards are broadly average by Year 6 but are not quite as good as they could be by Year 2. You clearly like school, work hard and especially enjoy all the extra activities you are offered. We know how well you do when you play against other schools. You behave well; although, we understand that a few of you are sometimes too boisterous in the playground.

Generally, you are good at looking after yourselves and other pupils. You and your parents appreciate that staff are approachable and sympathetic to any problems you may have in your work or personal development. The school certainly takes good care of you. Together with all staff, the new headteacher is improving your school by bringing in sensible activities, such as better learning targets for your work. We hope that all of you, through the school council, will help by providing ideas of your own to help the school move forward.

In our opinion, we feel the school could be even better if all teaching was equally good and that you had more chance to be responsible for your own learning. We have also asked the school to look at all aspects of the school very carefully so that they can be better than they already are.

We think that you have done very well to keep school life as normal as possible after the difficulties of the fire and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector