

Catforth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119160
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291341
Inspection dates	14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mrs Jackie Barnes

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anita Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Mandy Colligan
Date of previous school inspection	September 2002
School address	School Lane Catforth Preston Lancashire PR4 0HL
Telephone number	01772 690451
Fax number	01772 690451

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- *the attainment of capable boys,*
- *the personal development of pupils in the Foundation Stage,*
- *the impact of the increased use of assessment on pupils' progress,*

gathering evidence from:

- *lesson observation and pupils' work*
- *assessment information and data*
- *discussions with pupils, staff, and governors*
- *parents' questionnaires.*

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as provided in its self-evaluation, were inaccurate. These judgements have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a small school that is situated in a semi-rural area with a broadly stable school roll. It draws pupils from the local area as well as many who choose to travel from further afield including the city of Preston. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and their attainment on entry to the school is similar to that seen nationally for children of a similar age. A slightly higher than usual number of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 and it has some outstanding features. The school has the confidence of parents who value the family atmosphere, small classes and broad range of stimulating activities provided during and after lesson time. They confirm the pupils' views that school is enjoyable. This is typified by one parent's comment that "my children are very happy and enjoy learning in such an enthusiastic environment". Good leadership has successfully maintained the pupils' positive attitudes to school through providing excellent care and support for individual pupils in their personal and academic development. Achievement is good, standards are above average and pupils' personal development is outstanding.

Due to the size of the school, when the youngest children start school in the Reception year, they are taught in a class alongside Year 1 pupils. The overall attainment of children on entry to the Reception year is about as expected for their age although this can vary considerably between individuals. The inspection focused on children's personal and social development in their first year in school and found that their progress is good and sometimes very good. They settle well into the class group alongside older pupils and confidently undertake their tasks, talk to each other and staff, and take an active part in lessons. All are on target to be securely working within the expected goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1, with some already exceeding these. This is an improvement on the previous year when the school identified a slight dip in this aspect of children's development. The appointment of a teaching assistant to work with the Reception children in a small group for a part of each day within the class has proved very beneficial, especially in encouraging children to share their ideas, ask questions and cooperate with others.

The good progress made by the youngest children in the school continues through Key Stage 1, and by Year 2, standards are above average in reading writing and mathematics. The school attained particularly good results in mathematics in the 2006 national assessments for seven year olds. There has been a slight dip in progress through the first two years of Key Stage 2 and this was a focus for the inspection. This dip is being tackled successfully and progress is now gradually improving because the school is using its pupil tracking system more effectively to monitor progress, identify any plateauing in pupils' achievement, and to provide the necessary support for teaching and learning. By Year 6, the progress made by all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Those pupils identified as needing additional learning support are very well supported by staff and other pupils. Standards overall have been significantly above average for several years. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 6 are expected to be even higher than those attained in previous years and are exceeding the school's challenging targets. The inspection focused on the standards reached by more able boys and found that although fewer boys than girls had attained above average results in national tests in recent years, this was mainly due to a higher proportion of boys in these year groups having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently, able boys are achieving as well as other pupils and are attaining suitably high standards.

The good quality of teaching is firmly based on the teachers' extensive knowledge of each pupil and frequent discussions between staff to check progress and plan the next stage of their learning. This approach to planning pupils' learning is enhanced by flexible teaching groups involving more than one teacher having regular contact with each pupil. This helps to bring a broader and informed view of pupils' capabilities and progress to the discussions. As this is a small school, pupils know the staff well and are comfortable and confident in their various groups. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and interesting, with clear targets for improvement set for individual pupils. Pupils are sometimes taught in single age groups and occasionally pupils of above or below average ability find work too easy or too hard leading to a loss of concentration. However, in most circumstances, pupils of different abilities are taught well with tasks provided, which are well matched to their learning needs.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. A strong family atmosphere in the school is underpinned by high quality guidance and example provided for pupils on a daily basis. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during recreation time is excellent. They are lively, show good humour and self-esteem, and take great care for each other. They clearly enjoy school, especially the clubs and other activities at lunchtimes and after school. Attendance for the majority of pupils is above average. Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, helped by specific teaching and experiences designed to encourage good relationships and promote physical health. One of the school's main strengths is the provision for pupils' future well being. In addition to the good standards and ample opportunities for independence and leadership, their entrepreneurial skills are systematically developed through projects within the curriculum and through links with other schools.

The new headteacher, appointed at the beginning of the current school year, has provided effective leadership and built very effectively upon the school's previous achievements. Good improvements in the school's assessment and checking of pupils' learning are already leading to pupils making better progress. The staff work exceptionally well as a team, which benefits pupils of all ages. Each teacher has several areas of responsibilities and this co-operative approach to leadership and management works well. Due attention is given to safeguarding pupils with current arrangements meeting government requirements. The school's self-evaluation is based on good evidence as a result of thorough checks of pupils' development and wide ranging consultation. A focus for the inspection was the involvement of governors. They are an integral part of the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, are well informed, and take an active role in setting the school's priorities. When necessary, for example, in the drive for additional accommodation for the school, governors take a leading role in initiatives and vigorously pursue their objectives. The two new members of the teaching team have quickly established their ability to enhance the education provided and the school now has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils of different abilities always have a suitable level of challenge when taught in single age groups.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	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
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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

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.



15 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Catforth Primary School, Catforth, Preston, PR4 0HL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. You helped me to see how much you enjoyed being part of the school family and taking part in interesting activities in your lessons and after school. Your school is good and there are some outstanding features. Your behaviour is excellent and I was very impressed by the way you look out for each other. You clearly have good fun in school and enjoy learning. The staff look after you very well and are very good at helping you grow in confidence so you can talk about your ideas and work well with other people. You make good progress in your lessons, because the teaching is good, and the standards you attain are above average, so you should do well in the future. You help to give the school a happy atmosphere by being enthusiastic about your learning and co-operating so well with your teachers. Your headteacher and governors keep a close watch on how well you are doing, and they are good at providing the opportunities for you to achieve as well as you can.

Occasionally, one or two of you find your work a little too easy or too difficult, so I have asked your school to make sure that when you are working with friends who are the same age as you, each of you has work that is just challenging enough to keep up your good progress.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J M Barnes
Lead inspector