

Lees Hill C of E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112256
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310830
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Mortimer
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2003
School address	Lees Hill Brampton Cumbria CA8 2BB
Telephone number	01697 72577
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions, evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, curriculum, care guidance and support, and leadership and management. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This much smaller than average primary school serves families in north east Cumbria. The locality is very rural with an above average socio-economic character. A small proportion of pupils take free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average although none have a statement for special educational need. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none are learning English as an additional language. The school has the Healthy School, the Activemark, the Artsmark and Eco-School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lees Hill provides a good education for its pupils. It is improving and there are some outstanding aspects of its work. Here, pupils' academic achievement is good and their personal development and well-being are also good. The very effective leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, and the way that all staff successfully promote Christian values and uphold a clear philosophy that every child does matter, are amongst the many reasons why this school is successful.

Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stage 1. They begin Year 1 with skills and abilities higher than those typical for their age, especially in mathematical development. In recent years, they have reached significantly high standards compared to the national average for the Year 2 assessments. This year, writing standards were higher than for reading and mathematics. Group sizes in Year 6 have been very small in recent years and therefore general conclusions about standards cannot be made. In the 2007 tests, some pupils in Year 6 achieved well to gain high standards in mathematics and science particularly. Some did not do so well. Careful analysis of assessment data for pupils presently in the Key Stage 2 class shows that last year pupils made good progress in mathematics, with Year 4 making exceptional progress. Year 3 made outstanding progress in reading, and other pupils in Years 4 and 5 made good progress. All year groups made satisfactory progress in writing, which the school has properly identified as a key area for attention. Overall, standards are currently above average and achievement is good.

The many displays of pupils' work show how an exceptionally wide range of activities contribute to make their spiritual, social and cultural development good overall. Notably, pupils benefit from many opportunities which make their cultural development outstanding. Pupils know the importance of good health and fitness: many take part in voluntary sports activities, achieve success in competitions and most pupils choose a healthy meal at lunchtime. They act safely and sensibly and say that there is little bullying now. Pupils behave impeccably well, both in classrooms and in the communal parts of the school. Pupils take part in lessons with avid enthusiasm and contribute well. These are vital factors in the good progress many make in learning. They speak with maturity and confidence, have a positive outlook, and show politeness, care and respect for each other and adults. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, talk willingly about the friendships they make and their attendance is well above average. Pupils help enhance the school and the local community, for example, by contributing through the gardening club to improve the school grounds, and undertaking charitable work to help worthy causes. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their future through close working arrangements with local secondary schools and because their basic and social skills are well developed.

Almost all parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most have total confidence in the school and their trust is fully justified. Although a very small minority feel their views are not considered, or that bullying is an issue, the overwhelming majority of parents hold the school in very high regard and comment positively on progress, behaviour and communication. One parent's comments sum up their views, 'A happy and supportive atmosphere is coupled with a sound and well rounded education. For a small school the range of activities is extensive and provides the children with an excellent upbringing.'

Teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons very diligently. They take excellent account of pupils' different abilities and provide activities that interest, challenge and support them. Pupils

know what is expected of them. They work earnestly and industriously both as individuals and in collaborative groups. Teachers and support staff skilfully work together and ensure those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities all take a full part in lessons and achieve well. Teachers' marking congratulates pupils on their accomplishments, makes corrections, but is insufficiently detailed in the way it gives pupils pointers to improvement. Pupils' well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development result from a particularly effective combination of good teaching and a very rich variety of experience and opportunities throughout the curriculum. The school strikes a good balance of work in English, mathematics and science with other subjects including physical education and religious education. For example, displays include some excellent artwork and products made in technology, and the new computing facilities really enhance learning in many areas. Excellent partnerships with the Church, neighbouring schools and external agencies, together with the contribution of visits and visitors and the wide range of out-of-school activities all play an outstanding part in extending and widening pupils' learning and their personal development.

The school values each child as an individual. Teachers follow pupils' progress carefully and help improve their personal, emotional and academic development. Arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils are underpinned by procedures that meet current government requirements. They ensure child protection, health and safety, and risk assessments for activities are secure and up-to-date. Over the past year, pupils' work has been rigorously assessed and a detailed track record of their progress thoroughly analysed which, coupled with teachers' personal knowledge of each child, is successfully used to identify where help is needed. In turn, skilful coaching support helps individual pupils falling behind overcome particular difficulties. This relatively new process is working well, and many pupils who have been helped are clearly making good progress. Overall, the school offers its pupils outstanding care, guidance and support.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors who work harmoniously together. As a result of very diligent monitoring and evaluation, shared with staff and parents, they have a clear perspective of the school's work and an excellent development plan. They have already put important improvements needed into effect this year, and rightly aim to raise standards further, especially in writing. They are justifiably proud of recently improved arrangements to promote pupils' achievement, to gather information about how well they are doing, and to redress the deficit incurred to extend the premises and renew information and communication technology facilities. They recognise the importance of measuring the worth of their practice and procedures in terms of pupils' achievement and personal development. They follow a thorough process to set ambitious targets for improvement, based upon pupils' prior attainments and backgrounds. On the basis of successful learning now seen in school and the high quality of care and support, these ambitious goals are within their grasp. The school has addressed issues from the last inspection. Given its track record of promoting the good progress now clearly evident, and the governors' and leadership's determination to raise standards even higher, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception class with a range of skills which, for many, are broadly typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Parents of new starters are delighted with the way their children settle very quickly and enjoy school. Of particular note is the way children are thoroughly involved in activities and follow classroom routines. Children thrive and make good progress because of the very effective provision in this year, the last of

the Foundation Stage. They move on with skills and abilities that are further developed than those of many children of the same age. Most exceed all of the early learning goals in personal and social development, in mathematical development, and especially in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress and raise standards of writing in Key Stage 2 to the levels of those for reading and mathematics.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of 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
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

11 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lees Hill C of E School, Cumbria, CA8 2BB

I really enjoyed my visit to your school this week. Thank you for helping me when I came into your classrooms to see you at work. You were exceptionally polite and really helpful. I did enjoy talking with those of you whom I met. It was great to see how confident you are, how much you enjoy coming to school, and how much you contribute to school life. I know the headteacher and the staff are all very proud of you.

Yours is a good and well organised school which has a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. I am pleased that you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you exceptionally well. Your lessons are good. I like the way your teachers share with you what you are going to do in lessons. I was impressed with the way you work really hard and like to take part in lessons, and in all the other activities arranged for you. I was very impressed to see how well those of you who have extra help are doing. Last year, Year 2 and some in Year 6 did very well in the tests everyone has to take. I am delighted with the progress many of you are presently making with reading and mathematics especially. I have asked the school to help those in Years 3 to 6 to improve in writing so that your work matches the high standards you have reached in reading and mathematics.

You have very many opportunities at Lees Hill Church of England Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector