

Allithwaite C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112282
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310837
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Carole Cressey

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	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Dr Roger Latham
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Wall
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Church Road Allithwaite Grange-over-Sands Cumbria LA11 7RD
Telephone number	01539 532144
Fax number	01539 532144

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school. Most children come from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated progress, achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, care guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from the school's own self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; policies; minutes; observation of the school's work; interviews with senior members of staff and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. 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 were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Allithwaite is an outstanding school which lives up to its mission statement which reads, 'We aim to provide for our children an education that offers an enjoyable experience, high standards and a sense of belonging within a safe Christian environment.' Its very strong Christian belief is evident the moment a child, parent or visitor walks through the gate and is met by warm, welcoming greetings painted on the playground and beautiful reflective artwork on the walls. This outstanding school is exceptionally well led and managed. The headteacher's passionate commitment, enthusiasm and quiet determination to provide the very best education possible are shared by an excellent team of teachers, support assistants and a very effective governing body.

Leadership, including the governing body, rigorously monitors the quality of all aspects of the school's work. This ensures that teaching, care, guidance and support, along with a very exciting and rich curriculum are always of the highest quality. As a result, behaviour and attitudes are exemplary, standards are significantly above average and pupils are developing a love of learning and an exceptionally mature understanding of their responsibility to each other and the wider local and world community.

This school is a veritable 'tardis' which provides its pupils with exciting learning experiences which ensure that pupils achieve their very best and reach the very highest standards they are capable of. Every corner pupils turn round and every door they open leads them to a new learning opportunity. The inviting entrance with its photographs and certificates celebrates the school's boundless successes. Whether you are confident or shy, a fast learner or one who needs lots of reassurance, Allithwaite will have a place of honour on its walls, in its photo album or at one of its special assemblies, just for you.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. This is built on throughout the school and pupils continue to work very hard and achieve exceptionally well. In national assessments and tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are almost always significantly above average. The unusual dip in science in 2007 was quickly addressed. Everyone was galvanised to ensure that progress was accelerated and pupils are once again achieving their very best. Standards in the present Year 2 and Year 6 continue to be well above average in all subjects. In Year 6, every pupil is reaching the expected standards in English, mathematics and science and half of them are exceeding this level. Staff are exceptionally well trained to manage pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; as a result, they make excellent progress toward their targets, often reaching the expected level for their ages and taking a full part in the life of the school.

The major key to the pupils' successes are the regular and rigorous tests and observations teachers carry out to identify if pupils are making the progress they are capable of. Extra support is provided for those pupils who appear to be falling behind or for those who are learning at a much faster rate. At the top of the school there is a 'quiet haven' where those pupils who need extra help can work in small groups with their teacher. This helps them to concentrate and make better progress and as a result, they often soon catch up with their classmates or meet their own challenging targets. The school is so flexible that those pupils who work at a much faster rate can work alongside older pupils, enabling them to be really challenged and work at a much higher level.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers are especially skilled in helping pupils to know precisely what they need to reach the next level in their learning. This begins in the Reception class and as pupils move through the school they become more and more involved in how they can improve their work. Learning is very much a shared dialogue between teacher and pupil. For example, older pupils wanted a more flexible way to use their targets. They discussed this with their teachers and they now have 'post it notes' which they move from page to page in their work books. However, they are not plain 'post it notes', but they can choose the shape, colour and design, just adding that bit of interest, individuality and flair to learning. As a result, pupils have high expectations of what they can do and are comfortable in accepting helpful criticism and advice from their teachers and classmates.

Learning in this school is exciting and great fun. Whether pupils are in lessons, on visits to extend their thinking and understanding, or enjoying the many recreational clubs they are engaged in, there are exceptionally well-resourced activities which continually challenge them. Learning to be good writers in this school means that if you join the writers club you meet a real author who helps you to write your very own 'spooky story' book.

The excellent emphasis throughout the school on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is making a vital contribution to the future role of pupils in society and their economic well-being. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to be confident public speakers as they give presentations to the governors on topics such as archery, cake making and the Royal Family.

An excellent programme of social and health education provides the pupils with the necessary tools to develop personal safety, care and healthy living. A recent questionnaire completed by all the pupils confirmed the view of the majority of their parents that the pupils feel very happy, safe and free from bullying in school. This excellent climate for learning ensures that pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school council really does make a difference to the life of the school. Their innovative idea that the cloakrooms and toilets could be kept in tip top order through regular checks, just like the ones they have in supermarkets, has really improved the order and cleanliness of these areas. What a brilliant idea! Along with developing their responsibility within the school, of special note is pupils' understanding and respect for other cultures, religions and ways of life, whether they are a few miles down the road or a few thousand miles across the oceans. Conducting an eco-audit; lobbying their local MP to try and save their village post office; working unstintingly to raise funds to lease a bus for a school in India; sponsoring a young boy in Ethiopia; making video and e-mail links with a nearby city school or visiting a synagogue in Manchester are all everyday activities for these pupils which helps to prepare them admirably to be world-class citizens of the twenty-first century.

The majority of parents have complete confidence in their children's school. This comment is typical of most: 'I feel that the school is excellent and we are lucky to have such a great local village school.' The school judges itself as outstanding and the inspection agrees. The school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection; it gives excellent value for money. The school is exceptionally well placed to continue to be very successful.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding. Children start school with levels of development which are broadly typical for their ages. Teaching is

outstanding and children are quickly immersed in the exciting, practical and challenging activities, which are such a very strong feature of this school. Lessons are a buzz with hard work, good humour and caring, relaxed relationships. Progress is very good in the Reception class. By the time children move into Year 1 the majority are reaching and many exceeding the learning goals. Teacher led activities and tasks to promote the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number are taught especially well in an imaginative and fun way. As a result, children are well launched into reading, writing and number by the time they start in Year 1. The warm and welcoming atmosphere means that children are confident learners who are eager to experience all that is on offer. Wherever possible, children handle real materials and have daily opportunities to work in the exciting outdoor play area. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and receive sensitive support. This enables them to take a full a part as possible in the school community.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas to improve.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Allithwaite C of E Primary School, Cumbria, TS23 2BS

Thank you so much for being friendly and welcoming when I visited your school a short while ago.

I was so pleased to see how well behaved you are, how much you help each other in lessons and in the playground and how much you enjoy school.

I could see by the work in your books and displays around the school that you are all doing exceptionally well in English, mathematics and science. I was especially pleased to see how much your science work has improved.

One of the main reasons why your work is so good is because you listen carefully when your teachers tell you what you need to do to improve your work. You know your targets and what a good idea it is to have them on 'post it notes'. That way you can always have them handy to remind you of what you need to do to improve.

You are being so well prepared to be good citizens. I was very pleased to hear how much you know about all the many cultures, religions and traditions there are in our country and around the world. You also know how important it is that we all should respect each other's way of life. Well done for that. You are so generous in collecting money for children in Africa and India as well as people in need in this country. You know such a lot about the importance of conserving the world's resources, and you are learning the rules of democracy through writing to your MP about the threatened closure of your village post office. The school council really does make a difference to your school. What an excellent idea to have the cloakrooms checked regularly. I think you all are going to grow up to be very sensible, caring and tolerant adults.

You go to an outstanding school, where your headteacher and teachers make lessons fun and help you learn such a lot. I hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Carole Cressey

Lead inspector