

Caldew Lea School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112237
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337874
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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 of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Mudd
Headteacher	Mr Ian Johnston
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observed 16 teachers and spent more than half of the time available observing pupils' learning. They held meetings with governors, staff, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils. Inspectors talked informally to a small number of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation form; data on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires scrutinised included 120 from parents and carers, 38 from a sample of Key Stage 2 pupils and 10 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils currently in school, especially in mathematics
- improvement in attendance in 2009 and 2010
- the impact of teaching and systems of assessment on pupils' progress
- the impact of the creative curriculum on progress, learning and other outcomes
- whether care, guidance and support are outstanding
- the effectiveness of leaders in bringing about improvements.

Information about the school

Caldew Lea is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and of these a few speak English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are looked after by carers other than their own parents. Although there is an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, a well above average proportion have a statement of special educational needs.

Awards held by the school include Activemark, Healthy Schools and Creative Partnerships.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Caldew Lea is an improving school. Strengthened senior and middle leadership and governance have brought a much tighter focus on improving pupils' achievement and provision. An accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses and well-planned actions have led to improvements in key areas and demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further. An improved curriculum, better use of assessment information by leaders and class teachers and good teaching of basic skills in numeracy and literacy are all helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is rising rapidly, but remains low in English and mathematics. Overall progress is satisfactory, even though in most lessons pupils make good progress in response to good teaching. However, older pupils are only achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting points because their progress has been uneven in the past and some are still catching up on previous underperformance. Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. From low starting points they make good progress and most reach the levels of development expected for their age except in writing, which is weaker.

Staff share the school's strong commitment to providing good levels of care, support and guidance and to ensuring that all pupils are well safeguarded. Care and support are very carefully tailored to take account of each individual pupil's needs and family circumstances and, as a result, pupils feel safe in school, behave well and are ready to learn. The good level of care and support contributes to the good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those deemed to be more vulnerable. The school has positive relationships with parents and carers and a large majority of them are happy with their children's experience of school. A number comment on the very good care and support and how much their children enjoy school.

The well-planned curriculum supported by strong partnerships with other schools and providers ensures much excitement and interest for pupils. The topics studied and the many visits and visitors have had a positive influence on pupils' attitudes. Effective work with a few families has significantly reduced the amount of persistent absence. As a result, attendance, although still low, is improving rapidly. The number of holidays taken by pupils during term time still adversely affects the overall figure for attendance.

Pupils are proud of their school and are happy to play a significant part in improving it, especially through the work of the school council. They enjoy raising funds for charities and put considerable effort into performing for and working with different groups within the community such as older people. The school is a harmonious community where pupils from many different backgrounds settle in quickly and get on well together.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress further so that more pupils reach at least average levels of attainment, especially in mathematics and English, by:
 - improving the pace of learning and the level of challenge for all pupils, including more-able pupils, in the small proportion of teaching that remains satisfactory rather than good
 - providing more opportunities for subject and other leaders to develop and improve the effectiveness of teaching.
- Improve attendance to at least the national average by:
 - finding ways to discourage holidays taken by families in term time
 - working even more closely with parents and carers of children with low attendance so that they fully value the time their children spend in school.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and are eager to succeed. The praise they receive from staff and their awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is helping them to become confident learners capable of working independently. Pupils enjoy talking about their work with each other and there were many occasions when pupils worked well in groups offering support to one another. In a very small number of lessons pupils were less eager to learn because activities were not very interesting or challenging.

Since the previous inspection the school has taken effective action to improve provision and progress in Key Stage 1. Consequently, attainment has risen significantly and current attainment by the end of Year 2 and in the most recent national assessments is broadly average. Learning and progress are good in most lessons because the teaching is good and is helping to accelerate pupils' progress. However, achievement and progress are satisfactory overall because some older pupils are still catching up on previous underperformance. The school met some of its challenging targets for Year 6 pupils in 2009 and data on pupils' progress and work in pupils' books show that more pupils are on course to meet challenging targets in 2010 than in 2009. However, some more-able pupils are not yet fulfilling their potential.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because staff are well aware of their needs and additional support is carefully planned to help them succeed.

Pupils enjoy being active and many take part in extra sporting activities after school hours. Although pupils know how to eat healthily, they do not always choose wisely at lunchtimes. Most pupils are happy in school and develop a good sense of right and

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wrong. They are confident that the rare instances of bullying will be sorted out quickly by supportive staff. Many pupils grow in confidence as they take on responsibilities or enjoy taking part in community activities such as the development of allotments with older local people. Pupils are developing a good understanding of people from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths locally, nationally and globally. They are increasingly sensitive to their own and others' feelings and appreciate the spiritual messages they hear in assemblies such as the importance of trying to avoid temptation.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching and learning in most lessons are helping pupils to increase their overall rates of progress and achievement. Positive relationships, well-managed behaviour and high expectations of learning are characteristics of most lessons. Lessons are usually well planned and include a good variety of challenging activities that maintain a good pace of learning. Recent improvements to the way mathematics is taught, particularly calculation, are improving pupils' confidence in this aspect of their work. Teachers know pupils well, use assessment information with increasing precision to match tasks to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils' needs and know where to focus on filling gaps in knowledge and understanding, both in mathematics and English. Assessment is being used well to identify underachievement early and ensure that pupils get the support they need to help them to catch up. Pupils know exactly what they are trying achieve in literacy and numeracy and are increasingly motivated to reach their targets. Pupils' work is marked regularly and most pupils respond well to helpful guidance on how to improve. A small proportion of teaching does not provide a similar level of pace, challenge or stimulation found in the good lessons and in these lessons progress is more satisfactory, especially for more-able pupils.

A carefully planned curriculum with an emphasis on improving basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology is helping to raise attainment. Interesting topics and resources encourage pupils to talk and write about what they find out. Teachers ensure that pupils are well focused not only on what they write about but how they write. Pupils say that their individual targets are at the forefront of their thinking whenever they tackle a writing task.

Care and support for the more vulnerable pupils, including those looked after by people other than their own parents, is good and helps pupils to overcome difficulties that could otherwise become barriers to learning. Several case studies of individual pupils demonstrated that the school does all within its power to ensure that pupils are happy and settled in school and able to learn. The school has worked hard to improve attendance but there remain a few families who do not fully appreciate the value to their children of the time they spend in school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher sets high expectations and provides a calm and highly supportive approach that parents and carers, and staff, appreciate. He is well supported by leaders, governors and staff in the shared quest to improve the school. Targets for pupils' performance are challenging and realistic. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and of classroom provision by senior and subject leaders is helping to ensure that class teachers are increasingly held to account for pupils' progress. Improvement plans are well focused on the right priorities and this, and recent work on these priorities, is helping to raise attainment. Leaders make the most of local authority expertise to support these improvements. Increasingly, staff are sharing best practice, but subject

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and other leaders do not always have sufficient opportunity to work with individual staff to develop and improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

Governors are committed to their role and know the school well. A number are regularly involved in supporting the school on a day-to-day basis. Effective in-house training is helping to strengthen the role of governors in holding leaders to account. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fully understand the priorities set in relation to raising attainment. Governors ensure that the school complies well with requirements for safeguarding pupils. Health and safety is a high priority for governors. All staff have received recent training on child protection procedures and arrangements for vetting staff are robust. Governors are less aware of their statutory obligations in relation to community cohesion. However, the school has plans in place for pupils to develop an understanding of religious, ethnic and socio-economic aspects of its community. These actions have had a positive impact on pupils, who now come into contact with a wide range of community groups locally, nationally and globally.

The school ensures equality of opportunity for most pupils and tackles discrimination fairly. A great deal is done to ensure that all pupils, whatever their background or circumstances, are settled in school and able to learn. The school analyses the progress of different groups of pupils closely and takes action to close the gaps. However, despite recent improvements in the number of more-able pupils reaching the levels of which they are capable, there are still some who are not yet fulfilling their full potential.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Staff work well as a team to ensure that the needs of all children are routinely met. Safeguarding arrangements are good and health and welfare arrangements are securely in place. Close observation of children's progress, well-targeted tasks and support and effective work with a range of local agencies ensures that the learning and development needs of every child are recognised and well supported. Nursery and Reception children and their families experience a carefully planned introduction to their classes. Parents and carers appreciate the contact with the school and the way staff explain and support the learning and development of their young children. As a result, children settle into classes quickly, learning the day-to-day routines and about getting along well with other children. A good balance between activities led by adults and those where children play and follow their own interests helps children to learn and play happily and to make good progress in all areas of their learning. From low starting points most children reach average levels by the end of the Reception Year except in writing, which remains a weaker area. Leaders have a clear view of the strengths and priorities for improvement in provision and are tackling priorities well. However, these are not always clearly articulated in writing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school's work and inspectors agree with their positive views. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and about bullying not being dealt with adequately. Inspectors found that behaviour was good overall and that pupils are exuberant in the playground, which is well supervised. Inspectors recognise that there are rare incidents of bullying. They found the school's approach to these to be robust and consider that these are usually tackled and sorted out to pupils' and their family's satisfaction.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Caldew Lea School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	53	51	43	4	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	54	48	40	5	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	48	51	43	9	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	53	53	44	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	54	52	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	49	50	42	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	39	66	55	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	37	55	46	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	45	56	47	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	42	49	41	14	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	38	63	53	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	48	58	48	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	50	53	44	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caldew Lea School, Carlisle, CA2 7BE

Many thanks for welcoming my colleagues and myself to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of you and seeing you hard at work in lessons.

Your school is satisfactory overall and is improving rapidly. Staff take great care of you so that you feel safe in school, particularly those of you who face difficulties in your lives. The school works very closely with your parents and carers to ensure that you receive the support you need. You are well taught and you make good progress in most lessons. Most of you reach the challenging targets set for you and the standards you reach in mathematics and English are improving quickly. However, there are still some older pupils who have not yet reached the standards expected for their age because they have not caught up on times when they fell behind. The leaders of your school, including governors, are well aware of this and are working very hard to good effect to make improvements that are ensuring that it will not be long before you are all reaching standards in line with pupils of your own age.

You work hard to help improve your own school through the activities of the school council and you do a great deal for your local community. The allotment project with local older people looks really exciting. You behave well in school and most of you enjoy learning because you are well taught. Your attendance, although improving rapidly, is stubbornly below the national average. It is good to see that the improved curriculum and better learning experiences in lessons are helping to improve your attendance. It is a pity that a small number of families insist on taking holidays in school time and do not recognise the value of the time you spend in school.

We have asked the school to do these things.

- Ensure that more of you to reach at least the national average in mathematics and English.
- Make sure that the pace and challenge in every lesson is at least good and that all of you, including the more able, make good progress.
- Improve attendance.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector

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