

Bassenthwaite Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112128
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357049
Inspection dates	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rachel Ridley
Headteacher	Mrs Sara Royle
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Eight lessons were observed and four teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, and staff. The inspector spoke to a number of parents and carers as they collected their children from school. The school's work was observed and documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation, development and action plans, data on pupils' progress and attendance, policies relating to safeguarding, health and safety and community cohesion and the School Improvement Partner's most recent report. The inspector looked at 19 questionnaires received from parents and carers plus those completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether teaching is consistently effective in promoting good progress in mixed-age classes especially for more-able pupils and in writing and mathematics.
- The accuracy of the outstanding judgements made by the school for many aspects of pupils' personal development and the engagement of parents.
- How well pupils joining the school at times other than the usual start in Reception are supported and enabled to make progress.
- Whether children in Reception are well-prepared for reading and writing and what opportunities there are for play.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders in bringing about improvements in achievement, teaching and the curriculum.

Information about the school

Bassenthwaite is much smaller than other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a very few speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities including those with a statement of special educational needs. A well-above average proportion of pupils moves into the school at times other than the usual start.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bassenthwaite is a good school. Pupils are well taught and achieve well in their academic work. Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school a great deal, are very proud of their school and eager to learn. They develop into highly responsible young people and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support and, as a result, pupils are happy in school and feel very secure. Pupils behave exceptionally well and thrive within a highly supportive family atmosphere where relationships are excellent and staff know the pupils and their families very well indeed. Pupils joining the school at times other than the usual start in Reception are especially well supported, settle in quickly and make good progress. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the local community. The school council makes responsible decisions that improve the school. Pupils carry out very useful tasks within the community and contribute to village events. Pupils of all ages are very supportive of each other and are sensitive to each other's feelings. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their futures. They are punctual and attendance is above average. They use their good basic skills very diligently in their work. They develop useful social skills working in pairs and teams in a spirit of co-operation and endeavour. They take on leadership roles well and communicate clearly with each other and adults. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school's work and the school's engagement of parents and carers in supporting the school is outstanding.

Leaders and managers, well supported by the governing body, are strongly focused on ensuring that every pupil, whatever their circumstances or ability, is enabled to make at least good progress. They have high aspirations and continually look for ways to accelerate progress in order to move from good to outstanding achievement. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, if occasionally modest, and is underpinned by rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision. Consequently, the right priorities are identified and well-focused action plans drive improvement. For example, following the completion of a recent audit, leaders and managers are aware of the need to develop pupils' broader understanding of the diversity of society in the United Kingdom. Improvements made since the previous inspection demonstrate a good capacity to improve further and include a rising trend in pupils' achievement, improved attendance, improving teaching and a curriculum that is leading to rising attainment in writing and mathematics especially. Resources are very carefully managed and value for money is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and improve pupils' achievement further by:

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- securing the increase in the number of pupils reaching above-average levels for their age by the end of each year
 - ensuring that more-able pupils are fully extended and challenged in every lesson and that they are clear of what more they can achieve
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - involving pupils more in assessing their own and each other's work and keeping targets at the forefront of their thinking when they are working
 - increasing the focus on producing good handwriting.
- Improve pupils' awareness of the diversity of society in the United Kingdom by:
- increasing links with schools and pupils in areas very different to the school's location and catchment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

In lessons, pupils settle down to tasks quickly and are keen to do well. Their excellent behaviour supports their good learning and progress. They show interest and curiosity in their work and confidently ask questions about the tasks they are given. They co-operate very well in groups, as was seen in a science lesson when pupils of different abilities worked together to plan an investigation about solutions, and in a literacy lesson when groups of pupils enjoyed playing with the rhythms and words of limericks which they performed with accompanying percussion.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school from their varying starting points in Reception or at the point at which they join the school. The range of attainment when pupils start school varies a great deal because of the small numbers in each year group. Pupils' achievement is improving year on year and in 2010, Year 6 pupils exceeded their challenging targets and attainment was above average in English and mathematics. Within these good results, the school recognised the need to raise attainment further in writing and mental mathematics and actions taken are successfully accelerating progress. School data, work in lessons and pupils' books show that progress overall in writing and mathematics is good and at this point in the year there are more pupils on track to reach above-average levels by the end of the year. However, the quality of handwriting and the care of presentation of work remain variable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress; staff ensure that pupils receive carefully-targeted support to ensure their needs are met.

Pupils' exceptional behaviour and outstanding social skills are evident at lunchtimes when meals are served in 'family service' style, encouraging good manners, sociable conversation and healthy eating. Pupils are highly supportive of each other. They enjoy playtimes when pupils of all ages enjoy each other's company and use a good range of equipment to take part in healthy physical activities. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy although opportunities for out-of-hours sport are more limited in the winter months. Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about how to stay safe, including when using technology. Pupils have enjoyed raising funds for many charities such as the local Mountain Rescue Team. They have extended their understanding of cultures across the world through links with schools in India and Gambia, although contact with and awareness of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom is not as extensive.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers manage pupils and classrooms well; pupils feel secure, settled and ready to learn. Tasks and activities are varied and stimulating so pupils enjoy learning at a good pace; they say lessons are fun and challenging. Good subject knowledge enables teachers to use probing questions and encourage pupils to solve problems. Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers and work successfully, most often with lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and, on occasions, with more able and talented pupils. Assessment is used well to support learning. Teachers' planning takes account of prior learning across the age range in each class, and tasks are usually well-matched to pupils' different needs. Pupils are aware of lesson objectives so that lessons are purposeful. Occasionally, more-able pupils are not fully challenged because it is not made clear to them what more they could achieve in a lesson. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they receive useful guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Pupils have targets that guide their work which they say help them to focus on what to improve. However, these targets are not always at the forefront of their thinking when they are working and opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of others are not extensive. Homework is set regularly but does not give full scope for pupils to work independently.

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The curriculum is well-balanced and provides a good range of stimulating activities, for example, visits to a local forest and visits from key people within the local community, such as the police, the mountain rescue and an author. Progression in literacy and numeracy is well planned and there are good opportunities to improve literacy skills when working through themes or topics that span different subjects. Progression in developing skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy is well-planned but not yet fully integrated in the work within the themes and topics. A good extra-curricular programme in sport and music includes whole school musical and dramatic performances that involve every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school provides highly effective pastoral support for all pupils. Staff know individuals and their circumstances very well and their progress is carefully monitored so that potential slip-ups in progress are identified and tackled quickly. Support for the well above-average number of pupils joining the school at times other than the usual start are highly effective in helping pupils to settle quickly and happily and make good progress. Pupils are very welcoming to those pupils new to the school and, staff work closely with parents and carers to help pupils to settle in quickly. . The school communicates swiftly and effectively with a wide a range of local agencies to provide additional support for pupils whose circumstances mean they are more vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's ambition for the school is strongly supported by staff and the governing body. Staff work very effectively as a team with a clear focus on maintaining the school's very positive and supportive ethos alongside raising pupils' achievement even further. Improved systems for tracking pupils' progress hold teachers more closely to account and staff work well together to identify how best to support every pupil. Middle leaders contribute well to self-evaluation activities taking greater responsibility for identifying and tackling areas for improvement within their responsibilities. Performance management arrangements are closely linked to the school's priorities and lead to relevant professional development for all staff, including those who are part-time.

The governing body is highly supportive of the work of the school. The governing body holds the headteacher to account well and is appropriately informed of and focused on pupils' achievement. It is increasingly involved in self-evaluation activities and school improvement planning and takes responsibility for different parts of the development and

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action plans. Members of the governing body are undertaking training to support their evaluative role and introducing a policy and protocols to guide visits to the school. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are robust. The vetting of adults meets current requirements and child protection arrangements are securely in place. Regular and rigorous audits of health and safety arrangements are carried out by the governing body.

The school is inclusive and does whatever it can, in conjunction with other agencies, to provide for and support pupils from different backgrounds and circumstances. It has a good awareness of how well every pupil is achieving and takes rapid action to ensure that no pupil, including those learning English as an additional language, fall behind.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They are kept very well informed of events in the school and the curriculum. A number regularly supports learning activities in school and on trips. The school regularly consults parents and carers and involves them in decision making, for example, the development of the outdoor classroom. The Friends of Bassenthwaite group is highly effective in supporting school events and raising substantial funds to improve resources.

The school has a clear policy for community cohesion. Pupils have very good contact with and build positive relationships with a good variety of people within their local community. They link well with a number of international communities. A recent audit of provision and outcomes has focused the school, correctly, on seeking ways to broaden pupils' understanding and contact with the diversity of society within the United Kingdom.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception class make good progress in a mixed-age class. They enjoy working alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are positive role models for them. The school works hard with a wide variety of settings and with parents and carers to ensure that children are well prepared for joining the school. There is a good balance between activities led by staff and play activities chosen by the children across all areas of learning. There are regular opportunities to play and learn outdoors. Stimulating themes, such as the current theme on space, excite and interest the children and they contribute to planning activities that they enjoy. Early reading and writing are encouraged well through a well-structured programme to develop children's understanding of sounds and letters, well-planned play and activities led by teachers. There are occasions when there is not enough talk between adults and children and there are insufficient guided activities to encourage early basic skills when outdoors. Children are happy and safe and they learn quickly to share and take turns. They follow routines well and enjoy regular healthy snacks. Welfare arrangements are securely in place. Leaders and managers monitor children's progress closely and use this information to ensure that tasks are challenging. They identify priorities for improvement and take action, for example, improving liaison with the many different feeder providers.

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

Almost half of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Their responses were highly positive and many commented on the good teaching, the effective leadership and management, and the strong support for individual pupils, especially those joining the school recently and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bassenthwaite Primary 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 inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	68	5	26	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	74	4	21	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	58	7	37	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	68	6	32	0	0	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)	12	63	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	68	5	26	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	68	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	74	5	26	0	0	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



2 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bassenthwaite Primary School, Keswick, CA12 4QH

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I very much enjoyed meeting and talking to so many of you. Bassenthwaite Primary is a good school. The leaders and managers and the governing body work well as a team to ensure that you are very safe and happy in school and that the teaching and the learning are good so that you achieve well in your academic work.

Parts of your school are outstanding. You, the pupils, are a real credit to your school. Your behaviour is exemplary and you are very proud of your school. You make an excellent contribution to your school and the local community through the many responsibilities you take on and the activities you carry out in the village and surroundings. You are exceptionally well-prepared for your futures because you learn to co-operate very well with others, lead activities and you are sensitive and kind to one another. Your parents and carers are highly supportive of the school, helping out with many school projects. The staff are outstanding in the ways they care and support you all so that you settle in quickly, especially those who are new to the school, and feel happy and ready to learn. There are a few things I have asked the leaders, managers and the governing body to make even better: These are:

To help you make even better progress and achieve more highly by:

- ensuring that more of you reach above-average levels by the end of each year
- ensuring that the work is challenging for everyone of you in every lesson
- making it clear what more there is to learn to reach those levels in every lesson
- encouraging you to do more independent work
- asking you to check your own and each other's work more often
- remembering what your targets are and thinking about them as you work
- spending more time improving your handwriting.

Find ways to help you become more aware of the different people and cultures that live in the United Kingdom.

You can help by continuing to attend regularly and working hard and enjoying all that the school has to offer you. I wish all of you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector

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