

Arnside National CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112311
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310847
Inspection date	11 October 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 aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Dudley
Headteacher	Mr Alan Cook
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Church Hill Arnside Carnforth Lancashire LA5 0DW
Telephone number	01524 761159
Fax number	01524 761159

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, looked at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, 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 smaller than average primary school serves families who come mostly from Arnside and nearby villages where socio-economic characteristics range from average to well above average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The school holds the Healthy School Award and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Arnside National Church of England School provides an outstanding education. Pupils' academic achievement is outstanding and their personal development is excellent. This high level of success is because all the staff, under the very effective direction of the headteacher and leadership team, very productively promote the school's caring Christian ethos and a clear philosophy that every child is very important and deserves the best. An overwhelming majority of parents have total confidence in the school and their trust is fully justified. Although a tiny minority feel their views are not considered, almost all parents hold the school in very high regard. One parent's comments sum up the views of many: 'I am extremely happy with my children's educational progress, the range of activities at the school, and the care and empathy shown to my children'.

Year on year, pupils have reached very high standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school's results in the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6 in 2006 were significantly above national averages. In 2007 they were similar at Year 2; at Year 6 the standards attained had risen further. All pupils gained the expected level for their ages and a significant proportion attained high levels. Of particular note is that standards have been significantly high over the past few years and have surpassed the school's very challenging targets. Given that children's skills on entry to the Reception class are mostly typical for their age, pupils make exceptional progress and sustain outstanding achievement by Year 6.

A very wide range of activities, which pupils talk about enthusiastically, contribute to make pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development excellent. Pupils' behaviour and conduct are impeccable, in classrooms and in the communal parts of the school. Pupils are extremely polite and courteous, and show very great care and respect for adults and each other. Their very positive outlook and self-assuredness all reflect exceptionally well how the school helps them develop into mature and confident youngsters. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life and their attendance is excellent. They comment very positively on the friendly nature of the school. The achievement of national awards for promoting healthy lifestyles reflects pupils' awareness of the importance of good health and fitness and of safe and sensible conduct. The school does not have a canteen and many bring a healthy selection in their lunch-boxes. Voluntary sports activities after school are popular, and the school successfully promotes the cycling proficiency initiative which further helps to guard their safety. Pupils make a major contribution to help their school enhance the local community; for example, they raise money for charity, sing for residents of the local care home, and take part in the county agricultural show. Their school council plays an important part in helping improve the facilities and their own school community, for example, by promoting good relationships and behaviour through making sure pupils are befriended when needed. Year 6 pupils are very well prepared for their future because their basic skills are so well developed and transition arrangements to secondary school are a model of effective practice.

A particularly effective blend of excellent teaching throughout the school, a wide variety of rich experiences and opportunities to learn throughout the curriculum, and the way teachers help improve pupils' personal and emotional development lead pupils to achieve exceptionally well. Teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons very diligently together. This means that they are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and how to help them. All pupils take a full part in lessons and achieve outstandingly. Pupils know what is expected of them and, because activities challenge and interest them, they are very attentive and work enthusiastically

and industriously. For example, pupils in Year 6 avidly wrote newspaper reports following a thoroughly enjoyable introduction to the lesson. It was presented with flair and verve and really captured pupils' interest.

The delightful and purposeful atmosphere in the school stems from outstanding pastoral care and emotional support, which leads to the exceptional personal development and well-being of all pupils. Secure procedures safeguard children, with thorough routines for health and safety, including child protection. Links with local schools, outside agencies and parents very successfully enhance the curriculum and promote pupils' well-being. Very good procedures ensure children settle quickly into school, and that they are well prepared for a smooth transition to secondary education. The school diligently and rigorously collects information about pupils' attainments to track their overall progress and set challenging whole school targets. Teachers' personal knowledge of each and every child is clearly and successfully used to help those at risk of falling behind. Although teachers share targets with pupils when marking their work, these are insufficiently challenging or precise. Importantly, pupils are not given really clear pointers of what to do to improve.

The very effective partnership between the headteacher and governors ensures the school is outstandingly led and managed. Diligent monitoring leads to a very clear perspective on all aspects of the school's work and a mostly accurate evaluation of accomplishments. Senior leaders and governors have a very clear and tangible desire to foster continual improvement: their well informed action plan seeks to improve personal development and raise standards further. They obtain the best of value from their resources to ensure pupils' outstanding personal and academic achievements. The school gives excellent value for money and has successfully addressed all issues from the last inspection. Given the track record of sustained outstanding results and the determination to lift standards and personal development further, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children join the Reception class with a range of skills which, for most, are broadly typical for their age. Many parents comment on the way their children settle very quickly and that they are delighted that their children enjoy school. Of particular note is the way children quickly learn to follow classroom routines. Outstandingly effective provision in this year leads children to thrive and make exceptionally good progress. They learn exceedingly well through very good first-hand experiences, in and out-of-doors. They become very confident and show interest in what they do.

This year, all children leaving the Foundation Stage to join Year 1 reached all the nationally agreed early learning goals and most began Year 1 with very high attainment in all areas of learning. This gives them an excellent grounding for their future achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop precision in the use of target setting procedures with each pupil and help them know how to take their next steps in learning.

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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	1
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	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	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

15 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arnside National CofE School, Cumbria, LA5 0DW

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for helping me when I came into your assembly and classrooms to see you at work. You were exceptionally polite and really helpful and I did enjoy talking to you. I was especially impressed with those I met from last year's school council and those of you representing your classmates this year. It was great to see how much you enjoy coming to school and how you contribute to school life. I know the headteacher and the staff are all very proud of you. This is an outstanding school.

Your school has a very welcoming atmosphere and is exceptionally well organised. I'm pleased that you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well. Many of your lessons are excellent. I was impressed with the way you work hard and like to take part. I like the way your teachers often share what you are going to do in lessons. Those of you who were in Year 2 last year, and pupils who were in Year 6, did very well in the assessments last spring. To help you all, I have asked the school to consider setting you targets that will help you rise to the challenge of reaching even higher standards, and to let you know what you have to do to improve when your work is marked.

You have very many opportunities at Arnside National 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