

Kirkoswald CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112253
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357074
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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 of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Jervis
Headteacher	Mrs Greta Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
School address	Kirkoswald Penrith Cumbria CA10 1EN
Telephone number	01768 898461
Fax number	01768 898461
Email address	admin@kirkoswald.cumbria.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in five lessons and observed three teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed pupils' work and looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 38 parents and carers, 10 school staff and 46 pupils were also taken into account.

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

- The effectiveness of actions taken to raise attainment and achievement in Key Stage 1.
- The effectiveness of monitoring carried out by leaders on the school's performance.
- Whether teaching is challenging enough for pupils to make the best progress possible.
- How the school uses outdoor learning to promote pupils' learning.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to free school meals is lower than the national average. Most children are from White British heritages. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is lower than usually found. Pupils are taught in three classes: Reception with Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6. The number of pupils in each year group is usually less than 10. An independent provider runs a breakfast- and after-school club on the school site and this is subject to a separate inspection and receives a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark award.

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

Kirkoswald Church of England Primary School is a good school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are open to new ideas, they are fascinated by and keen to explore the world around them and to develop a very good understanding of different cultures. Outstanding care, guidance, support and safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are safe, happy and secure. Links with the community and a range of external partners help to meet pupils' needs and bring benefits to their learning and personal development. Pupils are keen to be involved with projects in the community and are proud of the important role they play through the school council in helping to improve the school. The skills and confidence that pupils develop ensure that they are well-prepared for later life.

Children's love of learning begins in the Reception class where they are well nurtured and cared for in a safe environment and make good progress. Indoor provision for young children is good but as the outdoor area is not fully incorporated into the curriculum, children have too few opportunities to enjoy their learning in the fresh air. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is above the average reflecting good achievement and progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress.

The school's good curriculum is enriched exceedingly well by the many and varied activities offered in after-school clubs and curriculum themes. In Key Stage 2, the use of the outdoor area has enabled pupils to achieve personal national environmental awards for their wide range of work, including poetry and art, inspired by nature. Pupils are well-motivated because good teaching is lively and lessons include a range of activities. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 are not always challenged enough in mathematics nor do they have sufficient opportunities to practice their mathematics across the curriculum. The extent to which pupils feel safe in school is outstanding. Pupils trust their teachers and other adults in school and say that this helps them to always feel safe in school.

The school has good capacity to improve. Its self-evaluation is accurate and a strong sense of motivation and dedication of its staff and governing body means that the school continually seeks to move forward. Improvements have been made since the last inspection resulting in a rise in attainment. Parents and carers have positive views, a typical comment being Kirkoswald is a very caring school where staff go the extra mile. Children thrive on the nurturing of the school staff.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:

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- providing pupils with more opportunities for mathematical activities across the curriculum
- increasing the degree of challenge mathematics lessons pose to pupils.
- Develop the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area so that:
 - activities reflect the stimulating indoor provision
 - children have more opportunities to choose to learn outdoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy learning. They say they like the work they do in lessons because they are exciting. Learning is enhanced by pupils' ability to support each other and to extend their ideas through talking together. The school has a focus on developing reading and writing and pupils in a Years 5 and 6 lesson were carrying out a role-play activity in order to look at the features and styles used in writing as a journalist. Pupils were thoroughly engaged in the activity, asked good questions and worked collaboratively in their groups.

Discussions after the role-play equipped them well with the skills needed to write a news report, especially in extending vocabulary and writing headlines. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had been exploring Greek myths and legends and during an English lesson, they worked with a partner to extend their knowledge of different characters in preparation for the performance of their play. Enjoyment and good progress were regularly seen during the inspection. Learning slows when pupils are not clear about how they can improve their work.

Overall, pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are expected for their age, but often lower in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress in the Reception class. They sustain good progress and achievement over time so that when they leave school in Year 6, their attainment is above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well because early assessment accurately identifies their needs and support for them is readily available.

Pupils' good behaviour has a positive impact on learning and reflects the school's warm and supportive ethos. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and secure because adults care for them and watch diligently during the day. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is good. From an early age they know how to eat healthily and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in fitness activities. Pupils are proud of their school and their involvement in the school and wider community is excellent. They take an active part in helping others, including regularly fund raising to support local, national and international charities. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to express their views, for example as members of the School Council, and enjoy contributing to school decisions.

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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	2
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	2
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?

Strengths in teaching lie in the very good relationships staff have with their pupils, which help to ensure pupils are motivated and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils make good progress because the staff plan work well which is particularly important as pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. However, there are occasions when there is not enough mathematical challenge, or enough mathematics activities in different areas of the curriculum, for pupils in Key Stage 1. Staff make clear their expectations of good behaviour, which most pupils are keen to live up to. Marking, of pupils' work is conscientious but doesn't consistently explain how pupils can improve their work. The work of teaching assistants is of a good quality. They are well-trained and are deployed effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Pupils benefit from a good curriculum which helps them to achieve well both in their academic and personal development. It responds successfully to the challenge of mixed-age classes and grouping pupils according to ability. Often lessons take pupils outside school and weekly use of a local woodland is planned into the curriculum for Years 5 and 6 pupils. Exciting activities provide pupils with vital opportunities to learn team-building skills, developing confidence as well as acquiring new skills and knowledge. These can include mathematics activities, for example, exploring measurement and capacity using the natural environment and the river. Visitors and visits to a wide range of localities play an excellent role in enriching the imaginative curriculum for pupils.

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The staff provides excellent pastoral care. They know and care for pupils and their families exceptionally well. Strong links with other agencies and schools ensure that particular learning needs have skilled intervention. Parents and carers appreciate the school encouraging their involvement in helping their child make good progress. Pupils identified as having strengths also benefit from planned provision and extra-curricular opportunities provided or identified by the 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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an accurate view of provision in the school and provides good leadership. Subject leaders are well-supported in their drive and vision for their subject. In the inspection questionnaire staff comment on feeling privileged to be part of such a hard-working team who are valued, very supportive of each other and highly involved in school life. The tracking of pupils' progress is carried out by all teachers to ensure that targets set for pupils enable them to achieve good outcomes.

Excellent links with a wide range of agencies are highly effective in developing provision. The governing body provides clear guidance; its members support and challenge with enthusiasm and commitment. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have a good involvement in shaping its future direction.

Through their monitoring role, members of the governing body ensure that policies and procedures for safeguarding are outstanding. The school adopts high-quality practice in all its safeguarding work and this impacts strongly on all aspects of school life. This is an inclusive school which works effectively to promote equal opportunities and avoid discrimination, making sure that no groups are disadvantaged. The school's strong involvement in the local community, its good links with other schools and the wider community and its success in extending pupils' awareness of other beliefs and ways of life, show that community cohesion is promoted well. The school gives good value for money.

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children settle quickly into the Reception class because of high-quality care and support they receive. Excellent induction arrangements and very good partnerships with parents and carers, including home visits, aid these early days when children start school. Teaching and learning are good because adults assess children regularly and plan exciting activities that closely match children's needs. As a result, children make good progress throughout their Reception year so that by the time they reach Year 1 most are working at above average levels in the majority of areas. However, skills in reading, writing and mathematics are sometimes still below average.

Reception children work alongside Years 1 and 2 and planning ensures that they are well catered for. If appropriate, for example when focusing on language skills, children benefit from working in small groups with these older pupils. The stimulating learning environment helps children to play, share and talk. In the post office children were busy sharing the role of sorting parcels. They stuck on the stamps and put the parcels in order from the smallest to the largest ready for delivery. A group of children enjoyed acting the roles in Red Riding Hood. They introduced themselves as they appeared in the play; they took their part very seriously including the wolf that enjoyed moving and talking ferociously. They worked as a team respecting and supporting each other during the performance.

The provision is led and managed well and planning for development and further improvement is good. The outdoor area has yet to be fully integrated into the curriculum to give children increased opportunities to explore, investigate and interact throughout the day. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because early assessment highlights their needs and teaching assistants provide good support.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 proportion of questionnaires received by inspectors was higher than average. Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children and most feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are pleased with their children's progress. Some parents and carers took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned, many to reinforce the strength of their positive views. There was also a small minority of parents and carers who raised concerns and these were looked into during the inspection. Some parents and carers were concerned about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors investigated these during the course of the inspection and found that behaviour is managed well by staff and that it is good in lessons and around the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kirkoswald CoFE 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 81 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	61	15	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	61	15	39	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	42	19	50	3	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	47	20	53	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	66	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	47	19	50	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	50	19	50	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)	14	37	20	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	45	18	47	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	37	13	34	7	18	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	45	12	32	4	11	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	17	45	17	45	2	5	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	50	18	47	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.



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirkoswald C of E School, Penrith, CA10 1EN

Thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and watching you learn in lessons. We found that you have a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. Your behaviour is good and raising money for various charities is just one way in which you make an outstanding contribution to the community. Overall, we found that your school provides you with a good education, so that you are able to make good progress in your work and reach an above-average standard before you leave school in Year 6.

There are some things that we have asked the school to do to help to make it better. First, for teachers to ensure that children in the Reception class have more time in their outdoor area so that they can enjoy doing a lot of their activities in the fresh air. Second, we have asked teachers to give pupils in Years 1 and 2 more opportunities to enjoy mathematics and to make sure that their mathematics work is always hard enough.

Congratulations on everything you do with the community and with other schools, we thought this was excellent. I enjoyed visiting some of you when you were in the woodland, what a super place to learn. I did wonder how many of you get wet when you do work in the river or on the island?

Your headteacher, staff and governors work extremely hard to make sure the school is a safe and secure place for you, so much so that the procedures they have put in place are outstanding. This is why you feel extremely safe in school. Remember always to do your best and help your teachers. Thank you for helping us and for being so polite.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey

Lead Inspector

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