

Kielder Community First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122233
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380430
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Webb
Headteacher	Fay Hartland
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by three teachers, one of which was observed with the headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils from both classes reading and scrutinised pupils' work from the current and previous school years. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils. The inspector also held a meeting with a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress and development planning. The five questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and staff were analysed.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average for its type. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. There are no pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs in the current cohort.

The school comprises two classes. In Class 1, Reception-age children are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Class 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught together. An acting headteacher was appointed in January 2012; she has been appointed substantive headteacher from September 2012. Class 1 is taught by three part-time teachers and Class 2 by the acting headteacher.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because the quality of teaching and learning are variable and do not promote good progress; provision for children in the Reception class does not develop their independence and confidence sufficiently, or provide enough opportunities for them to acquire rapidly a knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make). The acting headteacher carries too many roles and responsibilities because leadership roles are not distributed among all staff. Pupils feel safe and secure, and their parents are unanimous they are cared for well. School's whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall, but varies between classes. In Reception and Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory; in Years 3 and 4 it is good.
- Teaching is satisfactory because inconsistencies in teachers' planning and assessment of pupils' learning lead to variations in pupils' progress. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and spend too long talking instead of allowing pupils to learn from doing instead of by listening. Children in the Reception class are sometimes overly dependent on adults for support.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is satisfactory overall; it is excellent in the playground and around the school. In one class it is good and pupils contribute well to the learning of others; in the other class pupils do not consistently demonstrate the ability to work together successfully and are easily distracted. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- The acting headteacher has accurately assessed the most important priorities for improvement and shown decisive leadership by taking prompt action to involve the governing body in direct monitoring of the school's work. Leadership and management of teaching and performance are satisfactory and have identified where support is needed to improve the quality of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupil attainment and accelerate their progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' planning to ensure that there is continuity and progression for children in Reception and Years 1 and 2
 - extending the high expectations for pupils' learning and progress from Class 2 to Class 1
 - using assessment information to adapt planning to set challenging work for pupils
 - introducing a daily lesson in phonics to ensure rapid progress in children's ability to master reading and spelling skills without relying on adult support.

- Improve provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving consistency of expectations and practice and monitoring the effectiveness of provision
 - developing children's independence and confidence to learn from well-planned activities that are available throughout each session
 - developing provision for learning outdoors so that children can choose where they learn best.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - delegating and distributing leadership roles among all staff, so that they are accountable for contributing to the school's improvement
 - ensuring the headteacher has time to monitor effectively the work of the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children in Reception make expected progress over time from their different starting points and generally reach or exceed the levels expected of five-year-olds by the start of Year 1. However, learning for Reception children is not always well planned to ensure clear progression on a day-to-day basis, which can slow their progress as they adjust to changes of topic or focus when teachers change across the week. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, who share a class with Reception children, experience the same shift in focus for their learning, with the same effect on their progress. Children in this class learn best when they are actively engaged in learning for themselves, are allowed to work together and have the opportunity to develop their independence. This does not happen routinely and too often they are expected to listen to lengthy explanations from the teacher, when their enjoyment and interest in

learning declines and their progress slows significantly. Nevertheless, all children in the class try hard to adapt to the different methods they experience and make steady, though fluctuating progress overall.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils' attitudes to learning are much more positive and they are eager to work independently. They relish the high level of challenge in their work and are keen to demonstrate how quickly they can progress with the demanding work they are set. In one example, pupils worked with great determination and resilience to solve mathematical problems. They were undaunted by the difficulty of the task and maintained good concentration throughout two mathematics lessons to achieve their goal. They were justifiably delighted and proud of their efforts and had learned at a good rate. This enthusiasm pervades all of their learning and is seen in their pride in writing limericks and building thrones for the Jubilee celebrations.

At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, though here and in all classes it can vary widely year-on-year because of the small number of pupils, often only one, in each year group. Reading skills are not as well developed as they might be in Class 1 because there is not a daily programme of teaching phonics. This inhibits how fluently pupils read and reduces their confidence and speed when writing as they have few strategies for spelling words. Currently, at the end of Year 4, attainment, including in reading, is well-above age-related expectations although this varies widely from year to year.

Parents and carers unanimously agree that their children make good progress. The inspector judged progress to be satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory overall; it ranges from good, to some that is inadequate. Teaching is inconsistent in one class because it is not based on a shared vision of how children learn, expectations vary and weekly planning is inconsistent. This leads to some discontinuity of learning in writing and mathematics, which slows pupils' progress. In this class, the quality of planning is too variable. It promotes only satisfactory progress because it is not based on sharp assessment of what each child needs to learn next. Where teaching is good, assessment is used well to set a high, but manageable level of challenge. In such lessons, pupils develop a strong ambition to do well and sometimes make rapid progress because they are allowed to work at their own best rate. For example, the teacher's clear explanation and use of well-written limericks helped pupils to quickly grasp the rhyme pattern, while the use of a drum to beat out the rhythm gave them the understanding of how a limerick is constructed. Pupils were so inspired by the fun and challenge of writing their own that this continued into the dining hall, where they entertained younger pupils with their new learning.

Sometimes, younger children are prevented from making better progress because they are not allowed to fail with tasks. Some teachers are overly protective, which hampers pupils' ability to develop independence; occasionally their confidence slips and they become too dependent on adults for support and direction in their learning. Teachers in both classes make provision for pupils to develop their basic skills in other subjects. Pupils in Class 1 receive only one lesson of taught phonics each week

so their ability to transfer this knowledge to reading and writing activities is not strong.

Teaching makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through positive relationships and by providing a range of opportunities for pupils to learn about different places and traditions.

Parents and carers all agree that their children are well taught. Inspection evidence is that teaching is satisfactory over time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons vary significantly and are satisfactory overall. This is because in one class pupils are fired with enthusiasm for learning and work with gusto. In the other class, pupils' engagement with learning varies; they show little enthusiasm and tend to work at a steady rather than brisk pace.

Around the school and in the playground, behaviour is outstanding because relationships between pupils are excellent. Older pupils show high levels of care for younger children, who are delighted to join in games and play together with their older friends. Younger children willingly follow the good example set by older pupils. Collectively, pupils generate a very warm family atmosphere, both in and out of the classroom. Older pupils take on a number of responsibilities to help with the smooth running of this very small school. They act as excellent ambassadors for the school, for example, when they serve lunch to local residents on Community Lunch days.

All pupils say they feel safe in school, and that no one is bullied. They do report occasional upsets and squabbles and say that teachers are quick to sort out these minor problems. School records confirm this picture. Pupils have been taught how to stay safe. They know the risks associated with the internet and about different types of bullying. All parents and carers agree that their children are safe and they are pleased with the recent improvements to site security initiated by the acting headteacher. Inspection evidence confirms parents' and carers' views.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has shown good leadership by taking decisive and effective action to improve the school despite an almost full-time teaching commitment. She has developed the role of governors quickly, so that they now gather information about the school through directly monitoring its work. This has given governors the confidence and opportunity to fulfil their strategic role in setting targets for improvement and in supporting the acting headteacher to bring about change. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction to the school's work. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Important improvements have been made to site security, internally and outdoors. The environment has been improved with redecoration and new carpets, and work is under way to install a door which will give the youngest pupils access to learning outdoors when they choose. The acting headteacher's plans to develop staff skills and bring about greater consistency are good but are hampered currently by the

contractual commitments of staff. These make it very difficult for the school to organise professional development or staff meetings at a time when all staff can attend. The governing body recognises the urgent need to resolve these difficulties if the school is to move forward.

School self-evaluation is accurate, though limited to key areas at present because leadership roles are not delegated to any of the teachers. This hampers rapid improvement because not enough detail is gathered about all aspects of the school's performance. The acting headteacher struggles to find enough time during the school day to monitor the school's work rigorously. For example, she has introduced a new format to improve the quality and consistency of teachers' planning, which is not being implemented by all staff.

Members of the governing body are giving positive support to improving the school. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that links with parents are improving by consulting with them over planned improvements, and involving them more directly in the life of the school.

The broad and balanced curriculum is largely appropriate, but provision for children in the Reception class does not give them enough access to learning independently outside. Enrichment activities, including visits and visitors who bring new skills and expertise, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily and discrimination is not tolerated in this warm, welcoming school. The recently introduced website gives parents and carers good access and input to the life of the school. They are unanimously positive about the school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kielder Community First School, Hexham, NE48 1HQ

Thank you for making my visit to inspect your school so enjoyable. It was a pleasure watching you learn and play together. I could see that you all get on very well together and that older pupils do an excellent job in caring for younger ones. No wonder your parents and carers are so proud of you! Your school provides a satisfactory education for you so that you learn as well as expected and your achievement is satisfactory. There are some differences in how well you learn and are taught. I have asked the school to improve the rate of learning in Class 1 by seeing what works well in Class 2. I have suggested that teachers share good ideas on how to plan your learning so that you learn at a faster rate from the minute you start school. I have also asked the school to improve how well children in Reception make progress and enjoy their learning by planning more activities to help them learn for themselves.

Your behaviour in the playground and around the school is excellent. In lessons it is satisfactory because for some of you the set work does not interest you or you are not able to get on without help, which affects your attitudes to learning. You are well cared for in school and your parents and carers agree that you are safe and happy. I could see that you were happy during my visit and was very impressed by how well you play together and welcomed the children who are starting at your school in September. Your friendliness will help them to look forward to being a part of your school.

Your new headteacher is eager to improve your school quickly, but needs more help from other teachers to do this. I have asked the school to share out some of the work the headteacher does so that all teachers make a contribution to finding ways to improve the school. I know that you will all continue to play your part in improving your school and wish you all every success in the future. Finally, I very much enjoyed your singing – did you?

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick
Lead inspector

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