

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



11 July 2016

Mr Andrew Cairns  
Headteacher  
Kingmoor Junior School  
Liddle Close  
Lowry Hill  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA3 0DU

Dear Mr Cairns

### **Short inspection of Kingmoor Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your school was judged to be good in March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You lead the school with passion and tenacity and have developed the roles of other leaders so that effective use is made of everyone's expertise and talents. Leaders are uncompromising in their shared belief that all pupils deserve the very best. They take every opportunity to work with staff and parents to improve learning. Good relationships between adults and pupils continue to underpin the school's ethos of self-respect and tolerance. Numerous staff and parents told me that one of the qualities they most admire in you as headteacher is that you make time for them as individuals, listen to feedback and respond to it positively. Leaders are supported and challenged well by a skilled and ambitious governing body that has pupils' best interests at its heart.

Pupils enjoy their learning and participate eagerly in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that complement their lessons. The school's commitment to 'first-hand learning' is apparent in the wide range of opportunities that leaders and teachers provide, both within and beyond the school. These experiences help to build pupils' self-esteem. They express themselves confidently and have high aspirations for the future. The school prepares pupils effectively for secondary education, both in terms of basic skills and positive attitudes. Academic outcomes have risen since the last inspection and pupils' attainment, by the time they leave Year 6, is above national averages in all subjects. All groups of pupils make at least

good progress from their starting points, but their progress in reading and writing is not quite as strong as that in mathematics. Pupils, including those who face difficult circumstances, are resilient, determined and willing to take on new challenges.

Leaders and teachers responded swiftly to the areas for improvement identified at the school's previous inspection. As leaders, you have developed your processes for improvement planning so that you focus on the school's priorities in such a way that your work is manageable and your impact is measurable. You have introduced a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation that enables you to keep your finger on the pulse regarding the school's work. This includes regular progress meetings that lead to swift action where any gaps in pupils' achievement are found. Leaders have enhanced the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Strong communication and diligent record-keeping underpin the school's approach to continuous improvement. Teachers have shared practice both within school and with other local schools to improve teaching and meet the increased demands of the new national curriculum. Their teaching takes effective account of the skills of different groups of pupils and they provide many opportunities for pupils to develop independence.

The vast majority of parents who made their views known to me praised the school highly and felt that their children were making good progress in a safe environment. One summed up the views of many by stating: 'The school has been a wonderful experience for my child, both through teaching in the classrooms and through fantastic after-school activities.' A small number of parents expressed concerns about the impact of the growing number of children enrolled at the school.

Leaders' priorities for development are firmly grounded in an incisive and accurate evaluation of the school's performance. You have improved liaison with the neighbouring infant school to ensure that pupils' transition from key stage 1 to key stage 2 is as smooth as possible and you have plans for this work to continue. You are responding to the national imperative to raise attainment of most-able pupils, including through your work with colleagues in secondary schools. In response to some gaps in pupils' skills in writing and spelling, you have strengthened teaching and developed imaginative approaches that are having a positive impact on standards.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Thorough checks are made on all adults who work at the school. All staff receive training on safeguarding when they are appointed. In addition, they have individual discussions with senior leaders so that they are clear about the particular importance of their own roles with regard to keeping children safe. Training is regularly updated and includes topical issues such as the prevention of extremism and child sexual exploitation.

The school's policies are implemented rigorously and meticulous records are kept of safeguarding matters. Referrals are made to the local authority as appropriate; nothing is left to chance. School leaders have produced a helpful leaflet for parents so that they know exactly what steps to take if they are concerned about a child; safeguarding is agreed to be everyone's business. A family liaison worker has been appointed since the last inspection and plays a crucial role in safeguarding through her work with pupils, their families and external agencies. The school site is safe and secure. Pupils are taught about safety and are regularly reminded about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online or when they are completing adventurous activities on their residential trips.

Pupils' attendance is above average and very few pupils are frequently absent. The school is rigorous in following up any absence. All parents who spoke with me or completed the survey agreed that their children are safe, a view echoed by all pupils who expressed a view. Pupils told me that they are confident that staff would deal with any worries that they may have, and that bullying 'hardly ever happens because everyone gets on very well'.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders' and governors' evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement for Kingmoor Junior School is accurate and based on wide-ranging evidence. Thorough self-evaluation underpins leaders' improvement planning. Leaders express the school's key priorities clearly and there is a shared commitment among all staff to continuous improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, according to a senior leader, 'classroom doors have been flung open and a culture has developed where teachers are keen to learn from each other'. Training and development are given high priority. All staff who responded to the online survey strongly agreed that the school's leaders support their professional development well. As well as sharing effective practice within school, teachers work with colleagues in local schools to improve their skills. Working with a mathematics expert from a secondary school has been particularly powerful in improving teaching to challenge most-able pupils.
- You have successfully managed the expansion of Kingmoor Junior School. Two additional classrooms have been created since the last inspection. The increased number of pupils attending the neighbouring infant school has necessitated further expansion of Kingmoor Juniors for September 2016. You are determined that rising numbers will not have any negative impact on the quality of education that the school provides. Leaders have clear plans to ensure that pupils continue to be taught well.
- You are leaving the school to take up a new post in September 2016 and have ensured that you leave a legacy of strong practice on which Kingmoor can build. Leaders and governors have taken effective steps to ensure that the transition in leadership does not affect pupils' learning. An interim acting headteacher, who is

the substantive head of a good local school, will lead Kingmoor until a new permanent leader is recruited. The skills and willingness of your deputy and assistant headteachers, both appointed since the previous inspection, will help to ensure that Kingmoor's strong improvement is maintained.

- The school environment is bright and lively. The library has been refurbished and restocked and is now an attractive hub of the school that encourages and celebrates pupils' love of reading. The playground has been improved through imaginative markings and the creation of defined areas for different activities. The school council has led much of the improvement to the school's appearance, and pupils are justifiably proud of the contribution they have made.
- Pupils' outcomes continue to be good and are improving. The attainment of pupils who left Year 6 in 2015 was above national averages in all subjects, as were the proportions of pupils making expected progress from their starting points. The school's information indicates that this positive picture is being maintained. The progress made by pupils in writing is not quite on a par with their excellent achievement in mathematics. The school's data indicates that boys' writing skills are not as strong as those of girls when they join the school in Year 3. Much is being done to narrow this gap, including through finding 'boy-friendly' topics to inspire pupils' writing, such as a story about changing identity with a famous footballer that captured the imagination of Year 4 pupils.
- The local authority has provided timely support to assist teachers in developing pupils' writing. Year 6 teachers have been trained as moderators by a local authority adviser and have used the expertise that this has provided to support other staff in school. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from the support of the inclusion manager and special educational needs coordinator in developing their teaching, including for those pupils who have specific learning needs.
- The intensive teaching of spelling throughout the school is helping to boost pupils' skills and is also developing their vocabulary. Pupils' extended writing, displayed around the school, shows that their composition for different purposes and audiences is improving. Year 5 pupils' imaginative prequels to Ted Hughes' 'The Iron Man' showed their confident use of interesting vocabulary.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop a coherent system for recording pupils' progress in different subjects following the removal of national curriculum attainment levels. Regular reviews of pupils' progress by teachers and subject leaders ensure that they have a clear view of how well individual pupils are doing. They take swift action when any pupil is found to be falling behind. The leaders for special educational needs and inclusion play a crucial part in closing gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The school's collaborative working with the virtual headteacher responsible for children looked after by the local authority is particularly effective and has helped these pupils to make strong progress.

- At the last inspection, the school was asked to further improve teaching so that pupils were able to develop their independence. Teachers encourage pupils to learn from each other, to make use of displays and reference materials to help them solve problems and to persevere when tasks are tough. I was impressed by the maturity with which Year 6 pupils approached mathematical problems, without the need for adult support, and challenged each other's understanding of how to calculate the area of shapes.
- Teachers have risen to the increased demands of the revised national curriculum and are working hard to deepen pupils' understanding of concepts. We observed pupils enjoying scientific investigations and those in Year 3 were able to explain the difference between translucent, transparent and opaque objects. There were, however, a few instances in other classes where correct terminology was not insisted upon and the level of challenge was not stretching enough for the most able pupils.
- The school's vibrant curriculum and impressive range of extra-curricular activities continue to make learning meaningful and enjoyable for pupils. As one Year 5 pupil wrote: 'There are amazing opportunities here at Kingmoor Junior School. Teachers do their best to give children a brilliant and enjoyable education.' Kingmoor's enviable reputation for musical and sporting prowess, noted at the last full inspection, continues to flourish. I observed the school's award-winning early morning gymnasts and heard the exuberant singing of pupils preparing the end-of-year 'leavers' performance' of 'The Jungle Book': both examples testified to the school's prowess.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness continues to be paramount. Teachers find imaginative ways to capture pupils' interest in other cultures, such as in a lesson we observed where Year 6 pupils learned to play djembe drums, following instructions given in French. Leaders encourage teachers to try out different approaches to make learning engaging, and pupils respond with enthusiasm.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- good-quality transition between Years 2 and 3 continues to develop so that pupils' journey through primary education is as smooth as possible and their individual needs are known and met rapidly
- most-able pupils are continually well supported and challenged across subjects so that their skills in reading and writing are deepened throughout the key stage
- pupils' progress in reading and writing rises to the same excellent level that is seen in mathematics
- the vision and values of Kingmoor Junior School are carried forward as the school enters a phase of new leadership.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and other leaders in the school to discuss the impact of actions you are taking to raise standards in the school. I visited the early morning gymnastics club and breakfast club where I spoke to pupils at the start of the school day. You accompanied me on visits to all classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body, and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority. I spoke with pupils informally at social times and reviewed the responses made by 25 pupils to the online questionnaire. I spoke with 10 parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. Consideration was given to the 29 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free text comments made by parents. I reviewed 15 responses made by staff to an online survey. I considered your school's website, your self-evaluation document, your school improvement plan and information about the achievement of pupils in school. I reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements and its processes for working with the virtual school headteacher for the local authority.