

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PARKVIEW NURSERY SCHOOL**

Millom

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112089

Head teacher: Mrs D Earley

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning  
20267

Dates of inspection: 13 – 14 March 2000

Inspection number: 188149

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3 to 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St George's Road Millom Cumbria
Postcode:	LA18 4LE
Telephone number:	01229 772840
Appropriate authority:	Cumbria County Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Eland
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Parkview Nursery School is a maintained nursery situated in the small town of Millom on the edge of the Lake District. The area has changed little in recent years; the town is fairly isolated and unemployment remains high making Millom one of the designated Health Action Zones in Cumbria. Children attend the nursery part-time and there are 44 boys and 39 girls on roll. All of these are white ethnic origin and speak English as their first language. Four children have been identified as having special educational needs and two receive help from specialists. Children's attainment varies on entry. Some have a wide knowledge of books and the world although a significant number need more experiences to help develop language and literacy skills.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very effective nursery and purposeful leadership and management ensure that it is improving all the time. The quality of teaching is good and staff ensure that a wide range of interesting and sometimes unusual activities challenges three and four-year-olds. A particular strength of the nursery is the way children are encouraged to make friends with and respect others. The success of this is evident in children's very good behaviour and the warm relationships they forge with adults in the nursery. As a result of all this children make good progress in all of the areas of learning and get a good start to their education.

#### **What the school does well**

- As a result of high quality teaching children make good progress in all of the areas of learning.
- Staff ensure that children's personal and social development is promoted in everything they do.
- Children enjoy school, they are keen to learn and behaviour is very good.
- Strong and enthusiastic leadership means that staff are continuously striving for improvement.
- The partnership between the school and parents is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The outside area is not being used as fully as it could to promote children's learning in areas other than physical development.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The last inspection, in April 1996, found the nursery to be very good. Since then the head teacher and governors have done as much as they could to maintain high standards of provision with fewer staff. They have been particularly successful in using money donated by parents and many local businesses to transform the outside of the nursery into areas for exploration, quiet reflection and robust play. Staff use the area well to promote children's learning but intend to improve on this even further by linking indoor and outdoors activities. In addition, staff have worked hard to make their planning as effective as possible. They now review and plan together each week; a system that puts them in a good position to continue to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:		<b>Key</b>
language and literacy	D	well above average    A
mathematics	C	above average        B
personal and social development	B	average                C
other areas of the curriculum	C	below average        D
		well below average   E

Children's attainments vary considerably when they begin nursery. Some have had more experiences outside the home and are used to handling books. However, a significant number lack early literacy skills and have a limited vocabulary. During their time in nursery children make good progress. By the time they leave to join a reception class most have a wide enough knowledge of the world, understand simple number concepts such as counting and shape and have good creative and physical skills. They have made many gains in personal and social development and are ready for the next stage of their education. Although children have made good progress in language and literacy a number still lack confidence when talking to others.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to work and school. They enjoy their time in nursery, concentrate well and are very keen to learn new skills.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children behave very well. They play alongside one another and share books, games and toys. They listen carefully to instructions and always do as they are told.
Personal development and relationships	Children gain self-esteem and confidence as they get older. The relationships they form with staff and other adults in the nursery are characterised by warmth and friendliness.
Attendance	Children enjoy coming to nursery and attend very regularly.

Children's attitudes to school are extremely positive. They come into the nursery happily and are keen to get on with each new experience. Many concentrate for long periods on tasks such as making a model ship from household objects. They always listen to what adults tell them and follow instructions promptly. A strength of the nursery is the way children show a growing confidence as they get older.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	All of the teaching is good and almost a third is very good.
Lessons seen overall	9 teaching activities.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The large amount of good and very good teaching make this a strong feature of the nursery's educational provision. There are several strengths to the teaching. Staff are very good at assessing what children know and plan activities that help to move them forward quickly in their learning. In particular they never miss an opportunity to get children to talk about what they are doing and so extend their vocabulary. A further

strength is that staff make sure there is a wide range of experiences on offer each day and children get a good balance of working in small and large groups and time to choose for themselves. Children who have special educational needs or lack confidence are supported very well by all staff. As a result they make good progress in developing personal and social skills and in learning of skills and knowledge.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is rich and varied. It is planned well and procedures for assessment are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides children with special educational needs with carefully planned work and support, and reviews their progress almost daily with their parents.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for children's personal development. The ethos of the school ensures that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted in all they do.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Children are looked after very well. The nursery is a welcoming and safe place in which to learn.

A strength of the curriculum is that it is appropriate for both three and four-year-olds. Activities are planned so that older children build on the skills they have already learned and younger ones learn quickly by following the lead of others. This was evident when an older child showed another how to walk across the assault course using his arms to maintain balance. A particular strength of the curriculum is that the range of interesting and unusual activities planned for children catches their imagination, for example, children were fascinated and very gentle when bathing and blow-drying the guinea pig. A further strength of the school is the very good systems for assessing and recording what children have learned. Staff use the information they keep on checklists and files to ensure that children's work is always pitched at the right level to help them make good progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The school is led and managed very well. The head teacher is a strong and enthusiastic leader. She is supported very ably by a team of highly-motivated staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all of their legal responsibilities. Through their commitment, they help give direction to the work of the school and contribute to its effectiveness on a day-to-day basis.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff constantly review their own performance and effectiveness. They have a thorough understanding of what needs to be done in order to continue to improve teaching and the curriculum and know where their strengths lie.
The strategic use of resources	All of the school's resources are used to help children make good progress. The outside area is not yet used as fully as it could be to help children develop skills other than in physical development. However, this is one of the school's targets for improvement in the current year. Particularly good use is made of students, parents and governors to work with small or large groups of children and they make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching.



One of the main reasons for the school's success is the way that teachers and nursery nurses work together so closely. This means that they are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and also have a very good grasp of children's attainment and progress. Staff know what needs to be done to improve and prioritise initiatives for raising standards. Children's achievements in early tests are measured against their performance in national tests at the age of seven, in order to determine how effective the nursery has been in giving them a good start. The head teacher and governors spend the school's capitation money wisely and ensure that they get the best possible value for money and that children have good quality resources to help them learn. Parents are regularly asked their views of the nursery, sometimes informally and at others by questionnaire. They play an active part in shaping decisions about organisation.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents believe that their children are making good progress in school.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching staff with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Parents are pleased that their children like school.</li> <li>• They think that most of the teaching is good and staff work hard.</li> <li>• Parents feel that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents are not happy with the amount of work their children get to do at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents about the school. It is unclear whether parents' views about work taken home are that their children get enough or too much. The inspection team's judgement is that there are ample opportunities for children to take books and listening tapes home and between a quarter and half of children from each session do so.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**As a result of high quality teaching, children make good progress in all of the areas of learning.**

1 All of the teaching is good and a third is very good. Nursery nurses make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching.

2 There are several strengths in the teaching of literacy. They begin with careful planning, where staff ensure that there are regular opportunities each day for children to look at books and listen to stories and to engage in writing activities. When children come into the nursery they sit in their small groups and there is already a book on their chair. This encourages quiet reading and as they wait for others to arrive children often chatter about the book they have that day. Many children already have favourite characters and know their names. There are also times each day when children listen to stories that are told by staff or volunteer helpers. This helps children gain an understanding that words and pictures tell a story. The nursery also provides a range of books and tapes, which children take home whenever they choose. Quite a number of children take a book home on a regular basis, which further promotes their interest in reading. Staff also ensure that there are many opportunities for children to develop language skills. During activities in a small group, each child gets the chance to answer questions or give an opinion. Some respond with only one or two words but they gain confidence. In addition, staff encourage children to repeat the words they have used and this widens children's vocabulary. A good example of this happened when one child in a group began to practise the word *avocado* and one or two others joined in. By the end of that activity all children in the group knew the word. Finally, staff make sure that many activities involve writing. Children are encouraged to write notes and to write about their pictures. Teachers often act as a secretary, writing children's words.

3 Children make good progress in mathematical development because of the daily opportunities that staff plan for counting and working with number and shape. This is a good feature of the teaching. Children are frequently asked to count out, whether it is the number of petals on a flower or the candles on a birthday cake, they are aware that number is all around them. As a result, many children can count by rote, although fewer count the number of objects accurately each time. In addition to this, staff ensure that concepts such as colour and shape are taught in small group time. The activities help children make good progress because they require children to think and explore mathematics. A good example of this was when children had to place a coloured shape onto a matrix. This required them to consider colour in rows and shape in columns. Each child did it more easily the second time around. However, the challenge of the activity came right at the end when they had to say what the last, missing shape would be.

4 Staff plan a wide range of interesting creative activities. Children are motivated and make good progress in their singing and making of music because teachers make the best possible use of resources such as taped music and the skills of a governor who plays the piano. Once again, children make good progress in recognising and using musical instruments because teachers make sure to call them by the correct name. This means that by the time they are four many children can identify a guiro or maracas easily. Teachers are good at providing activities where children can explore colour, texture and shape. There are always painting activities and because children are expected to look carefully at what they are drawing some of their pictures of an amaryllis were very accurate.

5 The outdoors area has been improved tremendously since the previous inspection and teachers use this well for a range of physical activities. Children make good progress as a result of the frequent opportunities they have to climb, balance, use equipment such as hoops and balls and to engage in robust creative play on and around Thomas the Tank Engine. Inside the nursery, children gain control of a wide range of tools, such as paintbrushes, pens, scissors, gardening forks as they work in activities involving clay, sand and water.

6 In everything they do children gain knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers see this as vital part of what children need to learn and as such constantly relate activities to real life situations that children can understand. A good example of this was when children looked at photographs of themselves as babies and thought about how they had grown. One boy said that eating Tiger Flakes had helped him grow tall. Teachers also emphasise the importance of asking questions, such as why the guinea pig needs to be wrapped in a towel after a bath and what makes the bulbs grow. A particular strength of the teaching is the way that children are encouraged to explore, whether it is a computer software program, which involves clicking to make things happen on the screen, or investigating how much water it takes to fill a jar. All of these activities provide a good foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.

**Staff ensure that children's personal and social development is promoted in everything they do.**

7 The school's provision for children's personal and social development is one of its most outstanding features. One of the reasons that children make such good progress in this area is that staff encourage children to play and co-operate with others and to behave well in everything they do. Children are expected to share toys and to respect others. They know that it is not acceptable to fight or argue and that they should do as they are told. Because they are given plenty of opportunities to take on responsibility, such as tidying away, or carrying a message, most children quickly gain confidence and by the time they are four many happily choose which activities they would most like to do for part of each session.

8 Staff also know the children in their small group very well. This means that they know when a child is feeling unwell or is having problems. Children benefit from this arrangement because they know who their special person is and often go to them if they need help. Younger or less confident children often form close bonds with the adult from their group and stay close by them until they gain the confidence to go off and choose their own activities.

9 Children are given many good opportunities to be independent and they take full advantage of these. They are able to make their own decisions about the activities they want to try, and take responsibility for their personal care, for example, helping themselves to a tissue when they need to blow their nose. At snack-time, children are encouraged to chat sociably to one another and their teacher.

**Children enjoy school, they are keen to learn and behaviour is very good.**

10 Children are generally keen to come to nursery; they quickly take their coats off and join their small groups. The warm relationship that staff forge with children helps them settle quickly into nursery routines. As a result, children are willing to try out new activities or at least to look on as others do. Most are very eager to have a go at playing musical instruments or be chosen to act out a part in action games. One or two get quite disappointed if they are not chosen. Children's willingness to learn is evident in the way they listen attentively to what staff say to them and try hard to follow instructions. For example, one girl was able to roll a hoop without it falling over after she listened to the teacher telling her how to do it. Children enjoy their tasks and are keen to get involved with them. Many are able to maintain their concentration for long periods, often over 15 minutes, and persevere with their activities until they are completed.

11 Children respond very positively to adults and are happy to co-operate with staff and helpers. They follow guidance and do as they are asked, but are not afraid to make suggestions or seek help if they need it, for example, when they want another go at the computer game. Children get on well with one another and show sensitivity to the feelings of others, for example if a child is upset for any reason. They were particularly careful not to get water in the guinea pig's eyes when bathing her because they knew she

did not like it. Many collaborate effectively, such as at tidy-up-time, when children work together on clearing away their activities. This was also evident when children working in the sand pit joined forces to create a large sandcastle.

12 Behaviour is very good. Children are aware of the expectations for high standards of behaviour, and have the self-discipline to meet these. They know that they must share toys and equipment and generally do so without fuss. This was particularly evident in the way four children played amicably with the train set for a long period. When squabbles do erupt they are quickly sorted out by staff, who do this in a quiet and firm way that helps children understand why their behaviour is not acceptable. In the playground, children show consideration for one another and are able to take turns with wheeled toys and wait in line to have a go on the slide. They show respect for property, handling the nursery's resources with care.

### **Strong and enthusiastic leadership means that staff are continuously striving for improvement.**

13 The strength of leadership comes from a head teacher who has a thorough knowledge of nursery education and keeps up-to-date with local projects and national initiatives. As a result of her own enthusiasm for getting things right, she has built a powerful team of staff and governors who all share the same aims for continuing to improve the nursery.

14 Since the previous inspection, the head teacher has led the way in devising clear and rigorous procedures for monitoring planning and reviewing the quality of teaching. Staff have been particularly successful in improving the quality of planning. As a result of looking closely at long and medium-term planning, staff have begun to organise the nursery and children in different ways. There is now a room set aside for sand, water and other *messy* activities such as planting in soil. This is proving to be very successful and means that the main nursery area can be used for floor and table activities. In addition, staff now plan together, which ensures that activities build on what children already know and help them make good progress in all areas of learning.

15 Similarly, because staff review their work each week they are more aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. As a direct result of the systematic reviewing of teaching and learning staff have changed the way they group children. Each member of staff teaches a small group of children at the beginning of the session. Children then spend time choosing activities, which may be led by any of the staff. At some time during the day everyone gets together for singing and then children go back into their small groups for snack time. This is working very well.

16 As a result of careful monitoring, staff now have very effective systems for assessing and recording what children know and can do. In addition, the head teacher has begun to use information from their own assessments to predict what children will achieve by the time they are seven. She works closely with the head teacher from the adjacent infant school and together they are able to identify any gaps in children's learning.

### **The partnership between the school and parents is very good.**

17 The nursery keeps parents very well informed about its daily organisation and routines through its prospectus and the governors' annual report. These documents are clear and useful points of reference. Curriculum information is also very good. Details of topics and activities in each area of learning are made available on the noticeboard in the entrance to the nursery. This also provides a wealth of information about health issues and local events for those parents able to bring their children into nursery every day. Parents are actively encouraged to visit the nursery whenever they have a concern about their children and are welcomed to spend time in class if they wish to. Parents' feel that the nursery is welcoming, and staff

are approachable if they have problems. All believe that the hard work of the staff combine to ensure that children make good progress and enjoy their time in nursery.

18 Parents are very well involved with the work of the nursery, and this has a positive effect on their children's progress. They uphold the aims and principles of the nursery and support its values at home. The nursery makes every effort to get to know families and to create an environment where parents feel able to share information about their children's lives. In this way the nursery is able to tailor its work to meet the children's needs as closely as possible. Staff are always accessible to parents and welcome help from them in the classrooms. A number of parents and volunteer helpers provide regular and useful support to staff in a variety of ways, such as music-making, reading and working with groups of children. They are well-guided and directed by staff.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The outside area is not being used as fully as it could to promote children's learning in areas other than physical development.**

19 As a response to comments in the previous report the outside area has been transformed into an exciting and interesting area for learning. There is now an assault course, an area for gardening and planting, a wildlife area and plenty of room for safe play on wheeled toys, for climbing on large apparatus such as the slide and for imaginative play with Thomas the Tank Engine. Staff use the areas as much as possible, depending on the weather, and the many opportunities provided for outdoor activities is a significant factor in the good progress that children make in physical development. However, being a nursery where staff are always looking to improve provision they realise that the outdoor area has the potential to promote children's learning in other areas of the curriculum also. This aspect of the nursery's provision continues to be a target for development. Staff have already begun to consider ways that learning indoors and outdoors can be linked and are keen to tackle the next step, which is planning how this can best be done.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

20 The head teacher, staff and governors should

Extend the way the outside area is used for learning by

- planning to use it more specifically for mathematical, creative, and language development and to widen children's knowledge and understanding of the world; (Paragraph 19)
- ensuring that there are closer links between what is taught indoors and outdoors. (Paragraph 19)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed

9
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

6
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	33	67	0	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

Nursery
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Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	41.5
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

Nursery
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Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils
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Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils
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Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1998 - 1999
	£
Total income	5,426
Total expenditure	5,694
Expenditure per pupil	137
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,055
Balance carried forward to next year	787

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out 83

Number of questionnaires returned 64

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	89	11	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	81	19	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	23	2	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	28	22	3	9
The teaching is good.	88	12	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	23	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	94	6	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	43	2	2	7
The school works closely with parents.	61	38	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	91	9	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	21	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	31	4	2	13

### **Other issues raised by parents**

- Parents believe that the school sets good attitudes and values.
- They are very pleased with the caring attitudes of staff.
- A number of parents say they are proud of their nursery.
- Parents believe that staff work hard.