



Kells Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112169
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278868
Inspection dates 14 February 2006 to 15 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Geoffrey Yates

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant	School address	High Road
School category	Community		Whitehaven
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Cumbria, CA28 9PQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01946 852687
Number on roll	126	Fax number	01946 852688
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Barry Prest
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Kershaw

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 14 February 2006 - 15 February 2006	Inspection number 278868
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Kells Infant School is a small school, with its own nursery class. It is situated just outside Whitehaven, high on the cliffs overlooking the Irish Sea. The surrounding areas are characterised by rented property and long-term unemployment. No children speak English as an additional language. The percentage of children eligible for a free school meal is higher than in most schools. The school has an above average number of children with learning difficulties. When children start school they have very limited skills, especially in speaking, listening and social skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education and has some outstanding features. The overall judgement matches the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. However, the inspectors feel that children's personal development and well-being are better than the school's own assessment and are outstanding. Parents are justified in the confidence they have in the school. It is very welcoming and the children are a pleasure to be with and enjoy lessons. Teaching is good and children of all attainment levels, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress. The findings from assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do are used consistently in all classes. As a result, children achieve well throughout the school. Although standards are still below average when children enter Year 1, by the end of Year 2, they are average in reading, writing and mathematics, with higher attainers doing particularly well.

The curriculum is good and links between subjects make learning meaningful for the children. The school takes good care of its pupils and has a good understanding of their individual needs. The headteacher provides good leadership and the governing body carries out its duties well. The school rightly recognises that more still needs to be done to extend the opportunities for children to use their writing skills in other subjects and for better use to be made of marking. The school provides good value for money. It has overcome all its previously identified weaknesses and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, marking provides written pointers for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's standards and achievement are good. The school's performance has been above the national trend over the past three years. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress as do higher attainers.

On entry to school attainment is well below average. Children in the nursery and reception class make good progress but do not reach the standards expected of them before joining Year 1. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with national standards and around a quarter of the age group exceeds them. Standards in science are in line with those found in most schools. Although standards in writing are average, some opportunities are missed for raising them further; children have too few chances to use their writing skills in other subjects. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Children reach the targets set for them and the targets

set are suitably challenging. A particular strength is the quality of children's singing. In all subjects children make good progress because of good quality teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's provision is outstanding. By the time they enter Year 2, children are confident which demonstrates outstanding improvement from the time they enter the nursery. Children behave very well in lessons and around the school and there is a really happy atmosphere in which children thrive. Most children demonstrate very good attitudes to learning and those that don't receive very good help from the learning mentor. Children say they enjoy being at school and that teachers give them interesting things to do. A good emphasis on learning basic skills is laying very good foundations for children's economic well-being. Provision for their spiritual, moral and social development is good and, as a result, children know what is right and wrong, accept responsibility and care sensitively for each other's safety and well-being. Cultural aspects are developed well and have included visits from an African dance team. Children are taught how to stay healthy and keep fit. The start-of-the-day 'mind gym' activities are outstanding with a high uptake of children who really enjoy taking part. Children know who to go to if they are worried or unhappy, and are confident that staff will help them. Time is set aside in all classes for children to share their concerns. Positive strategies to encourage good attendance have been successful and attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are good. The learning mentor and teaching assistants provide invaluable support for individual children and work effectively with teachers in lessons. Consequently, all children, including those with learning difficulties, do well. Adults and children enjoy very good relationships so that children behave well and usually pay close attention in lessons. Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan lessons and, as a result, children make good progress. Particular good use is made of teaching children in groups based on prior attainment in mathematics in order to ensure that all children make good progress. However a weakness in teaching is the lack of opportunity for children to use their writing skills well in subjects other than English. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations and good rapport with children. Good use of planning in the Foundation Stage ensures that all areas of learning are catered for well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is thoughtfully planned and sufficiently broad and balanced. The good personal, social and health education programme helps children to keep safe and stay healthy and prepares them well for the future. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from good facilities, including a well planned outdoor area. Good links are being made between subjects in Years 1 and 2 so that children can see a greater relevance in what they are learning. Children take part in a good range of extra curricular activities which they enjoy, for example the computer club and the town music festival. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors which extend children's understanding of other cultures and the wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care provided for pupils is good. All adults in the school show a commitment and competence in promoting the health and safety of the children, and arrangements for child protection are understood by all staff. Staff are sensitive to children's feelings and anxieties. They take particular care that all children are included in every aspect of school life. Induction arrangements for children starting school are good. Children's personal needs are thoroughly understood, especially those with learning difficulties. One parent commented, 'Staff deserve recognition for their perseverance, patience and outright brilliance.' A 'playground helper' system helps children to care for each other. Children are supported to improve their academic work through target setting and feedback in lessons but teachers' written comments in children's books do not provide enough pointers to show children how to improve their work. The records for children with learning difficulties are good and the school works very well with parents and other agencies to ensure that children can achieve their potential.

Children arriving at school in the Foundation Stage at different times of the year are well cared for. Families receive good support from the learning mentor as do the children with emotional needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is the driving force in developing a successful school and raising standards. The school has good capacity to improve further. The headteacher's good leadership, firmly based on a good knowledge of infant education, has created a happy school where children achieve well. The views of governors, parents and pupils are considered as part of the school's self-evaluation process. One parent commented, 'The school is very well run and caters well for my children's needs.' The school's leadership team is very aware of how the school is performing overall. The 'next step' approach is proving to be successful in

explaining to children how they might improve but opportunities are missed when children's work is marked to provide written pointers for development. All children, regardless of ability or background, are included and able to achieve their best. This aspect of provision is outstanding. Teamwork is a very strong feature and the assistant headteacher and subject coordinators carry out their duties well. Parents are very supportive of the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. The governing body has improved since the previous inspection. Its role in finding out how well the school is doing is met well through the links made by governors with subject coordinators and the chair of governors' regular contact with the headteacher.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Kells Infant School

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16 February 2006

Dear Children

I want to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work and also enjoyed talking to your headteacher and teachers and watching your 'Brain gym' session.

What I liked most about your school

You are well looked after and enjoy going to school.

You are taught the right things, make good progress and are learning as well as you should be.

You behave well, and get on well with each other.

You have a good headteacher; she is doing the right things to make your school even better with help from your teachers, the learning mentor and classroom helpers.

Your parents are very happy with the school.

What I have asked your school to do to make it even better

To provide you with more opportunities use your writing skills in subjects such as religious education, history and science.

To make sure your teachers when they mark your work sometimes write comments that when you read them will help you make your work better still.

I hope you will all do as well as you can at school. My best wishes for the future!

Yours truly

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector