



John F Kennedy Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108825
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288198
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Moira Fitzpatrick

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Station Road |
| School category | Community | | Columbia, Washington |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | Tyne and Wear, NE38 7AR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0191 2193745 |
| Number on roll (school) | 433 | Fax number | 0191 2193745 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Frank Caroll |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Maggie Johnson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 May 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with less than 5% from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There are fewer pupils than average who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; of these, four have a statement of special educational need. The school has been adversely affected by teacher turnover in the last two years but now has a settled staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory and there are strengths in pastoral care, pupils' personal development and provision in the Foundation Stage. Most parents are happy with what the school offers and say that teachers care well for their children. Inspectors agree that pupils are well cared for and supported in their personal development. Teachers' guidance for pupils' academic development is satisfactory, but their knowledge of National Curriculum levels is not detailed enough to allow them to spot quickly when pupils need more challenge in their work. Pupils enjoy school and are well prepared for their future well-being. They behave well because teachers expect them to care for and respect each other, and they do. They have a good understanding of personal safety and healthy lifestyles and are keen to take plenty of exercise. Pupils take on responsibility willingly; they are improving the school through enterprising projects such as the Friendship Garden and are good fundraisers for a number of charities. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving through well planned enrichment activities. For example, pupils' understanding of the wider world is developed well through links with schools in South Africa and America.

Teaching is satisfactory; it ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are in line with the national average. Given their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Results in national tests in 2006 were average for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2, and all pupils made satisfactory progress. Fewer pupils than usual exceeded the expected level in Year 6 and this caused the school's overall performance to dip slightly. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was above the national average in reading.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been affected by staff turnover in recent years which has slowed progress. Staffing is now settled so that senior staff are able to focus consistently on the development of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The headteacher has given a clear lead to improving the way the school tracks pupils' progress and this is beginning to have an impact on standards. Improvements to the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) are having a good impact in raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' knowledge of National Curriculum levels so that they provide a better match of work for learners and gain a more accurate picture of progress each term.
- Improve school evaluation by monitoring all aspects of standards and provision regularly so that senior managers have a fuller picture from which to set priorities for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls although, in some years, girls outperform boys in the national tests. Children start school with attainment that is broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and almost all meet the goals set for their learning by the end of Reception and some exceed them.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. In national assessments in 2006, Year 2 pupils reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils now in Year 2 are on course to reach similar standards.

The school did not meet its targets in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2006 in mathematics or English although pupils had made satisfactory progress overall from their attainment at the end of Year 2. The school realises it had set the targets too high and has based this year's targets on more regular assessments of pupils' learning. Pupils now in Year 6 are on course to meet their targets in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils in most lessons, but teachers do not have a clear responsibility for tracking their progress and sometimes under-achievement is not picked up quickly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy their education and this is demonstrated by their positive attitudes, good behaviour and the good attendance of most pupils. Pupils enjoy their learning but there are a number of higher ability pupils who would like to be given more challenge in some lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of how to have a healthy lifestyle, which is seen in the good levels of participation in physical activities after school as well as in their healthy eating, which the school works hard to encourage.

Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they are well supported by adults; this is reflected in the calm atmosphere around the school. Their good behaviour helps learning to progress steadily in all classes. They willingly seize opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school by acting as monitors and playground friends; and to the development of the school by the part they play in the decisions of the school council, which has done much to improve provision for playtimes. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through developing their Friendship Garden, fund raising and concerts. Their basic and personal skills prepare them well for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features seen in all lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, although their assessment of pupils' learning is not always accurate enough to ensure that their expectations are high enough. The result is that more able pupils do not always have work that challenges and motivates them to do their best. All pupils work hard to meet targets and nearly all make at least satisfactory progress. All teachers explain to pupils what they are expected to learn. This is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of their progress during lessons. However, teachers' marking does not always support this process enough because they seldom refer to the learning targets in their marking or consistently give advice on how to improve.

In most lessons, teachers make good use of questions to check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking. In some classes, the use of an interactive whiteboard speeds up the pace of learning because pupils have good visual support for learning and are actively involved with the challenges shown on the board. In other classes, where there is no interactive whiteboard, pupils' learning is not as brisk because pupils are more passive and learn mainly through listening. In the Foundation Stage, learning is good because adults have high expectations and match work to children's needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Some aspects are good, especially the enrichment of the curriculum through links to local and international schools, and in the provision of many after-school activities. The curriculum adequately matches the needs, interests and aspirations of most pupils and is organised in a way that allows them to build on earlier learning.

Planning for the development of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is adequate and recent improvements to planning in the infants are beginning to raise standards there. Thorough planning for personal, social and health education encourages pupils to stay healthy and teaches them about personal safety. Specialist provision for art and design, music and French is good, providing pupils with well planned opportunities to develop special interests and talents.

Planning in the Foundation Stage provides a good balance of activities that are led by adults and selected by children. This ensures that children learn to make choices and decisions about their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care and support for pupils' personal development are good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and risk assessment are in place and used by staff.

Guidance for pupils' academic development is satisfactory. The development of assessment and recording procedures has progressed slowly in the last three years due to the turnover in staff. Currently, staff do not have a good enough knowledge of National Curriculum standards at each stage to plan precisely what pupils need to learn next. Because of this, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not consistent or rigorous enough to ensure that these pupils always make good progress; although in last year's national tests some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did well. Parents of children with identified emotional or behavioural difficulties appreciate the efforts made by teachers to include their children in the life of the school. The school has good links with external agencies to provide specialist support when pupils need it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including the school's self-evaluation procedures, are satisfactory. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory and improving. Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover in staff, which has slowed the rate of improvement. The recently formed senior management team has worked hard to establish assessment and recording procedures so that pupils' progress can be tracked more effectively throughout the year and any underachievement spotted quickly. However, the considerable amount of information that the school has about pupils' learning is not collated into a format that is easily usable by teachers and senior staff. This reduces the effectiveness of what has been achieved and the new systems have not yet had a significant impact on standards across the school. Although subject leaders have regular opportunities to monitor teaching and learning, there is insufficient monitoring of standards of work in books. This limits subject leaders' knowledge of standards throughout the school and restricts the early identification of weaknesses and action to overcome them. The school recognises the need for more regular monitoring of pupils' work and has this as a priority for this year.

Governors are very supportive of the school although they do not have secure, first hand knowledge of standards and provision through direct monitoring. Parents, too, are highly supportive and appreciate the school seeking their views on developments. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the level of the school's communication with them on a range of matters. Inspectors found that the school sends a regular newsletter to parents and parents are welcome to contact the school about any concerns they have.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

John F Kennedy Primary School

Station Road

Columbia

Washington

Tyne and Wear

NE38 7AR

9 March 2007

Dear Children,

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. We really enjoyed our visit.

It was very clear that you enjoy your school and get on well with each other and your teachers. You told us that teachers look after you well. We agree and it was good to hear that your parents think so too. We think your behaviour is good and that you work hard in lessons. Some of you told us you would like work that is a bit more difficult and we agree that many of you could tackle more challenges in your lessons. We have suggested that your teachers find out what challenges you need to progress at a quicker rate. We have also suggested that looking at your books regularly would help the teachers see where you need more support and encouragement. You could help by doing your best work every time and making sure it always looks as beautiful as it does in your blue writing books.

We were very impressed with the work you do to make your school run smoothly and to improve it. Your Friendship Garden is a lovely idea and is coming along really well. The best of luck in finishing it and we hope you enjoy using it. It was good to see so many of you making healthy choices for your school lunch and so many of you involved in after-school sport. Well done! Being fit and healthy is so important to your learning.

Finally, we would like to say thank you for being so well behaved and working hard in lessons. Such good attitudes help everyone to learn and to enjoy school as they should. Keep up the good work of improving your school and our best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Goodchild, Mr Steele, Mrs Fitzpatrick

Inspectors