

Irthington Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112113
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289177
Inspection date	3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Bryant
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Irthington Carlisle Cumbria CA6 4NJ
Telephone number	01697 72913
Fax number	01697 742814

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	3 May 2007
Inspection number	289177

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Irthington is a small village school and pupils are grouped into two classes. There is a wide variation in children's skills and educational experience when they enter the Reception year. Overall, they enter with standards expected for their age. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Pupils are of White British heritage and none is from a minority ethnic background.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. Standards have risen over the last two years because of the inclusive nature of the school, its commitment to equality of opportunity for every child and good teaching. Parents are supportive and speak highly of the welcoming and family atmosphere where their children feel known and valued. The school's standing in the community has grown as a result. Pupils say they enjoy school, feel safe and secure and that bullying does not exist. They are confident that their welfare and safety come first. The care, guidance and support they receive are exemplary. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles to stay fit and well. Older pupils take on responsibilities by helping with the younger children and all contribute to the local community through fund raising activities and through public performances. The school aims to 'Create a happy, safe, caring learning environment'. It does.

Standards are above average and pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively and make the same progress as others. The most able pupils are set challenging learning activities and they also progress well. Pupils have good literacy and computing skills and the personal qualities for future success. Some pupils have difficulty using their number skills to solve problems. Their ability to transfer such a skill for different purposes is an area for development. Pupils' personal development is good, as is their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Attendance rates have improved on last year's average figures. There is no unauthorised absence.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The adaptation of learning activities to meet the diverse needs of the mixed age and ability groups is a strength in the teaching. The excellent outdoor facilities are used extensively as a learning resource for all pupils. The younger children particularly enjoy the supervised freedom to explore and play together. The excellent tracking of pupils' progress enables teachers to spot underachievement quickly and take effective action to remedy weaknesses. Pupils know how well they are doing. They understand their learning targets and what they must do to improve. Curriculum provision is good and pupils speak highly of the enjoyment they get from the extra-curricular activities, the visits out of school and the visitors who come to speak to them. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in higher standards.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and she has the support of able and diligent teachers and support staff. They have made the school into an example of how to meet the academic and personal needs of every boy and girl. Governance is good and there is effective financial management and deployment of the school's resources. The school gives good value for money. It is strongly placed to raise standards further because of the effective teamwork and the cohesion of the staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' ability to use number to solve problems.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Results in national tests are liable to fluctuate from one year to another because of the small number of pupils involved. By the end of the Reception year, standards are similar to those expected for children of their age. Some children exceed such levels. The

results of the teachers' assessments in Year 2 were slightly below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2006. This represents good achievement considering the ability profile of the small number of pupils involved. The individual monitoring of pupils' work shows good progress in Key Stage 2 and, over the last two years, test results have improved to above average. They were particularly good in English and science. The school exceeded its performance targets in 2006. Its tracking and assessments show that current standards in Years 2 and 6 are higher than they were last year. Progress and achievement are good. The school has as a priority for development the improvement of pupils' problem solving skills through the use of number.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. In this school, every pupil is known and valued by every teacher and classroom assistant. Pupils know that staff will listen to their concerns and that there is always someone to turn to if they have worries. As a result, they say they feel secure and happy in school and that they all look out for each other and get on well. The older pupils help to look after the younger children during playtime and the lunch break and act as reading mentors. Behaviour is excellent and pupils work hard. They are polite and courteous and have a love of nature. They enjoy school and there is no unauthorised absence. Attendance rates were average in 2006 and have improved since. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They eat healthily at lunchtime and take plenty of exercise. Pupils have good basic skills and the personal qualities to make the most of their education and to prepare for the future. Visitors, such as fire and police officers, ensure that pupils know how to keep safe. Pupils are aware that they have a role to play in the local and wider community and are enthusiastic to help others. This can be seen from their involvement in fund raising activities and the shows they put on for local residents. The production of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat had to be staged for an additional night to accommodate local demand.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and are the major factors for the good progress pupils make. Pupils say they enjoy lessons because activities are presented in an interesting manner. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection in the quality of planning to cater for pupils of different ages and abilities in each class. Lesson planning is now very good. In the Reception year and Key Stage 1 class, activities led by adults are varied and include opportunities to choose tasks and work independently. Observation and recording of the number and variety of birds made for an exciting numeracy lesson outdoors for the Reception children. Very good use was made of paired working and practical activities in the Key Stage 2 class to develop pupils' understanding of complex sentences. The good standard of presentation of pupils' work testifies to their positive attitudes to learning. Handwriting is well formed and clear. Teachers and their assistants have established excellent working relationships with the pupils and blend their high expectations of them with sensitivity to their needs and occasional worries. They ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and they guide them well on what to do to get better. Good use is made of computer technology as a teaching and learning aid.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is relevant to pupils' needs and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Good links with the local nurseries and the high school ensure continuity in curriculum provision and a smooth transition between phases. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. The Reception year curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and there is excellent outdoor space and equipment for the children to play and learn together. Good provision is made for improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the use of information and communication technology. The school is successful in using visitors, such as artists, musicians and actors, to broaden pupils' understanding of their work and add richness to the curriculum. The excellent outdoor facilities are also used well as a curriculum resource for all pupils. They enjoy and are fascinated by the wildlife and pond area, for example, and learn a lot about living creatures and their environment. The range and variety of after school activities is extensive and involves all pupils. Very good use is made of community resources and links with other schools to provide for the creative aspect of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding because of the high quality of care and support each pupil receives. Its aim of creating a happy, safe, caring learning environment is evident in everything the pupils achieve. The emotional, social and learning needs of every child are understood by all who work in the school and those needs are met. The staff are committed to pupils' welfare and to helping them develop into confident and responsible young people. The youngest children settle quickly and well into the school because of the excellent induction arrangements. Procedures to safeguard pupils are thorough and follow current national guidelines. The school is conscientious in addressing risks at school and when pupils are out on activities. Pupils say they feel well supported by trusting relationships. Close links with external agencies and parents enable staff to support pupils sensitively and effectively. The school makes excellent use of assessments to track pupils' progress and to set appropriate learning targets. Information is used well to spot pupils needing additional help and to put effective support in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and it is her determination that has driven the improvements of the last two years. She is well supported by an able and committed Key Stage 1 teacher and by the classroom assistants. They provide exemplary care and support for every child and have been successful in providing an excellent learning climate throughout the school. Its standing in the community has improved significantly since the previous inspection and it is now oversubscribed. Parents of two children wrote, 'I would like you to know how fantastic we feel Irthington School is with all credit going to the headteacher and her team'. Self-evaluation processes are thorough and there is wide consultation. Governors know the school well and are its enthusiastic advocates. Teachers and assistants look to improve their skills and they take advantage of a range of professional

development activities. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection and its capacity to improve further is good.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

3 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Irthington Village School, Carlisle CA6 4NJ

Thank you for the welcome you gave me during my recent visit and the time many of you spent talking to me about your school. I enjoyed my short stay and only wished I had had more time to see all the creative and interesting things you do.

Yours is a good school with outstanding features. You told me how well you are cared for and that you feel safe and happy and enjoy your work and play. You are very courteous and work hard, and you get on together really well. You are confident young people and take full advantage of the wide range of outdoor activities and after school sports and productions. I heard a great deal about Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and about the Christmas production of Scrooge. Congratulations on winning the local rounders tournament and getting to the semi-finals of the netball competition.

You have many qualities to be proud of. Your behaviour is excellent and you show consideration for others. The older pupils help the younger children and you do a lot to support others through your fund-raising activities.

You have done well in improving your literacy and computer skills. What you are not so good at is using your mathematical skills to solve problems you meet in all your subjects. Your teachers are working with you to improve this skill and you can do your part by letting your teachers know immediately if you don't understand something.

Thank you again for showing off your school to me. I wish you all every success!

Best wishes,

Brian Dower

Inspector