



Kirkby Thore School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112181
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289193
Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006
Reporting inspector Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kirkby Thore
School category	Community		Penrith, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	4–11		CA10 1UU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01768 361497
Number on roll (school)	83	Fax number	01768 361497
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Keith Robinson
		Headteacher	Mrs Christine Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006	Inspection number 289193
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a socially and economically mixed area. A below average proportion of pupils have free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Attainment on entry is typical of four year olds. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including five pupils with a statement of special educational needs. A recently opened Children's Centre is attached to the school.

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, with good features in the personal development and well-being of pupils and the care, guidance and support they receive. Value for money is satisfactory. The pupils achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave school and their progress as they go through school is at least satisfactory, with good progress in Years 3 and 4 as a result of good teaching in these year groups. Progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children reach standards that are broadly in line with those expected for children this age.

Standards in the national tests vary from year to year because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group. They are broadly average in mathematics and science and below average in English by the time pupils leave school. Steps to improve standards in English are in place but are not yet having sufficient impact on improving teaching and learning.

A good priority is given to promoting enjoyment and healthy living. Pupils enjoy regular fitness and additional sports activities provided after school. Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They develop good levels of confidence and are articulate. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in the mixed-age Year 3/4 class, which is characterised by a brisk pace and high expectations. In some classes, teaching is less effective because of a lack of clarity about what teachers expect pupils to learn. Sometimes insufficient attention is given to reviewing at the end of the lesson what has been learned, especially in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactorily supported when under the direction of teachers, but less well when working out of the classroom. Assessment procedures provide detailed information about individual pupils, but there is no whole-school overview to track the progress of cohorts of pupils year by year. The curriculum is satisfactory with enrichment activities a strong feature.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve reading and writing. She is well supported by the English subject leader and the governors. Actions to raise standards in reading and writing are well documented but have not yet had time to make an impact on improving pupils' learning. School evaluation is over generous in some judgements, although the priorities for improvement are close to those identified by the inspection. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by improving the quality of teaching and by ensuring that pupils know what they will learn and how they can improve their work.
- Streamline assessment procedures to provide a more manageable system which can track pupil progress accurately year on year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily; those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily overall, and the results of the national tests show they achieve well in Key Stage 1.

Attainment on entry is typical of four-year-olds when they start in the Reception class. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children exceed the expected standard in personal, social, emotional and physical development, and are reaching the expected levels in the other areas of learning.

The results of the national tests show considerable variation year by year because of the small numbers of pupils in each cohort. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 1 and 2. The results of the 2005 national tests for Year 2 pupils were broadly average. The results of the 2006 tests were similar but more pupils than in the previous year exceeded the level expected for their age in writing and mathematics.

The broadly average standards reached in the 2005 Year 6 national tests were an improvement on the previous two years but were lower in 2006 when the school met its target in mathematics but not in English. The impact of recently introduced actions to tackle the underachievement in English is not yet evident in pupils' learning. This is confirmed by the inspection, where Year 5 and 6 pupils work at lower than expected levels. Progress throughout Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with some good progress in Years 3 and 4 as a result of higher expectations and a secure understanding of what is being taught. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) and use their skills competently to support learning in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say their school meals are 'the best ever'. As a result of the priority given to healthy eating, pupils know that crisps, chips and chocolate milk are banned and replaced with fruit and bread. Fitness is well promoted through the good outdoor provision available to all pupils along with a daily 'wake up and shake'. Pupils learn to take responsibility through their involvement with the school council. Fundraising events broaden their understanding of the lives of others less fortunate than themselves. They have caring responsibilities for younger pupils through the friendship bench and in their buddy roles.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure because their teachers take care of them and relationships throughout the school are strong. Attendance is satisfactory. A few pupils are absent through illness, but overall there are no persistent absentees because everyone enjoys coming to school. In discussions, pupils aptly demonstrated their confidence and assurance in talking about school. The range of responsibilities they have prepares them well for their future well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development is good, effectively fostered in the caring atmosphere that pervades all aspects of the school's work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with good teaching in the mixed-age class of Years 3 and 4 pupils because of the teachers' confidence and secure knowledge. All teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to make learning enjoyable. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding especially in the Foundation Stage. Pupils have good attitudes and behave well in lessons, although occasionally pupils have to sit and listen for too long and become restless. At times, what pupils are expected to learn, although shared and displayed, is too general and too little reference is made to what the children have learned in the reviews at the end of a lesson. This is particularly so in English teaching but is less evident in mathematics because of training and support provided in the past year. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although this is less effective when they work out of the classroom. Recent steps to encourage parents to support reading at home are having a positive impact on standards because they now hear their children read more regularly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with strong features in the range of enrichment activities. The pupils spoke very positively about the enrichment of the curriculum, citing residential visits and the wide range of out-of-school clubs. Curriculum planning for the mixed-age classes, although satisfactory, sometimes does not clearly show what pupils are to learn over time.

More able pupils are given additional challenges in their weekly lessons at a local secondary school. 'Aim high' is the school's motto which is very much at the heart of the curriculum and the priority given to basic skills. The recently introduced short basic skills lessons with Key Stage 1 pupils, are making a good impact on their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality care is reflected in the very positive views held by parents. The systems in place to ensure that pupils are safeguarded meet current requirements. All staff are trained in safeguarding pupils. Child protection procedures are rigorously followed and protect pupils well. Good attention is given to limiting potential hazards on educational visits.

The extensive systems to check pupils' academic progress are very thorough, but can be burdensome to teachers because they provide too much information which makes it more difficult to focus on individual pupil progress. Completing detailed individual records of achievement leaves staff too little time to assemble useful whole-school records of progress against National Curriculum levels for each year group.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher knows what needs to be improved and has implemented action designed to raise standards in reading and writing. She is very well supported by a recently appointed English subject leader. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have spent considerable time in school, monitoring learning in classrooms. The arrangements to check the school's work are satisfactory and cover teaching, marking, planning and the pupils' work. Steps to improve teaching are still developing in some classes. The personal development and well-being of pupils is effectively promoted through the caring ethos across the whole school.

The school's self-evaluation shows a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and concurs with the inspection judgements in several, but not all sections. Equal opportunities are satisfactorily promoted. All pupils are generally included in lessons and the needs of those requiring additional support are satisfactorily met. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the headteacher manages the dual role of teacher and headteacher well. Recent building works have improved the accommodation and added a children's centre and community room on site. The school is well resourced. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

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	3
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	3

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?	2

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

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

12 Oct 2006

The School Council

Kirkby Thore School

Kirkby Thore

Penrith

Cumbria

CA10 1UU

Dear Pupils

Thank you for helping me during my recent visit to your school. I enjoyed the two days very much, especially talking to you. I am writing to tell you about the findings of the inspection.

What is good about your school

- You like school very much and have great fun playing on the outdoor equipment at playtimes.
- You eat very healthily and learn to keep fit.
- Most of you work hard in lessons.
- Your teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to help you learn and you all use computers well too.

What should be better about your school

- In Key Stage 2 you are not learning to read and write as well as you should, so your teachers are working hard to make sure you improve.
- Your teachers have been asked to explain what you have to learn more clearly in lessons.
- Your teachers have been asked to make all the assessments they have simpler so they can see how well you progress during your time at school.

You can help by making sure your parents or carers hear you read very often and encourage you to write at home too. You can write shopping lists, cards to friends and family or keep a daily diary. Thank you again for making my visit so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector