

Newlaithe Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112226
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289208
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Harker
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Massey
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001
School address	Langrigg Road Carlisle Cumbria CA2 6DX
Telephone number	01228 607532
Fax number	01228 595851

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school serves a residential area with private and social housing that has signs of some disadvantage. Broadly average proportions of pupils are eligible for free school meals and have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very small proportion of children speak English as an additional language or come from Traveller backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage (Reception) varies, but skills are below those typically found, particularly in literacy and social skills. The school has received a range of awards, including Healthy School, ActiveMark and the Cumbria Quality KiteMark for the Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that it is good and has some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Parents understand that the school has been through a period of disruption caused by staff absences and a large influx of pupils from a neighbouring school that closed. As one parent put it, 'the integration of the pupils has gone well; the initial concern over the change of class formation has disappeared.'

Pupils' personal development is good and owes much to the outstanding care, supportive ethos and good curriculum of the school. Pupils respond well to the very good enrichment activities that effectively support their good understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles. The teaching is good and the pupils learn well, although occasionally opportunities are missed to assess progress during lessons. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school and the improving attendance bears this out. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions when the typically good behaviour and relationships are obvious. Older pupils play a key role in this by helping the youngest children. All this to the important work done by the school council, and pupils make a strong contribution to the school.

Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage because teaching, curriculum and care are high quality and means that the young children progress well and reach expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and achievement is good. Standards are beginning to rise after a couple of years when higher proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have caused them to dip. There has been a clear rise in the proportion of pupils getting above average results in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents are rightly pleased with improvements in this area and with the way their children enjoy school and show good attitudes to learning. One parent expressed it this way: 'He enjoys school and because of this his reading, writing and number skills have come on in leaps and bounds.' As a result, pupils have a good basis for future learning and life. Pupils' enjoyment is maximised by the expectation that they successfully take a full part in all that is on offer in the rich curriculum. Pupils are appreciative of the good range of activities that enrich their time in the school. The school's links with other agencies are good and provide opportunities that broaden pupils' experiences and the support they receive.

Leadership and management are good. The highly organised headteacher leads the school with initiative and vision. Even though senior staff have been absent, there has been a continuance of good practice and this has been noted in the community: 'I feel the school improves all the time even this year when there has been lots of changes.' Governance is good and governors are very supportive and helpful. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a clear idea of what it has to do to improve further. Consequently, there is a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching to that of the best, especially by making full use of assessment opportunities in lessons so pupils know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are average. Good progress in the Foundation Stage means that the vast majority achieve the goals expected of them. The development of numeracy skills is strong. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years with low standards in 2003 and 2005, mainly because there have been more pupils than usual with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards in 2006 were broadly average, which shows a good improvement because the use of developing assessment and tracking procedures is much more effective. The challenging targets set for this year reflect this progress and work in pupils' books is broadly in line with the goals. The proportion of pupils who now achieve the higher than average Level 3 is also improving. Results in the 2006 national tests were best in writing and mathematics. Basic skills in reading, writing and number are strong and there are good examples of these skills being used well in other subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and the few from the traveller community are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal, social and emotional development of Reception children is good. They make good progress, often from a low starting point. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is well promoted in assemblies and social and moral development is successfully fostered in lessons. As a result, behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. These strengths and good academic progress mean that pupils have a secure foundation for their future learning. There are a few pupils who do not settle or listen well but teachers make generally good use of the school code of conduct to manage this effectively. Pupils say that learning is fun and this was exemplified by the spontaneous applause of the youngest children when their programme of activities for the day was discussed. Attendance is satisfactory and close to the national average. School councillors are mature and sensible; for example, when they discuss matters of importance to them. Pupils are quick to contribute to the life and work of the school. They recognise the importance of working to support others in local and more distant communities. Pupils feel safe and secure because they know the school takes strong measures to ensure their health and safety. They know how to stay safe and who to turn to if they have any concerns. Appropriate awards show that pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and vigorous exercise in and outside lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes good progress. Teaching is very effective in Reception and there is a clear emphasis on the development of good basic skills and the reinforcement of these in structured learning through play. In these classes, staff show good knowledge of how young children learn. High expectations are the norm and are based on very good knowledge of children's varied levels of skill and abilities. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good and promotes good progress. The positive atmosphere in all classrooms supports pupils' good attitudes to their work. Teachers are well organised, present new learning

clearly and use resources well; such as, the interactive whiteboards to reinforce and strengthen learning. Management of lessons is good and there are few disruptions. Where teaching is satisfactory, there are missed opportunities to assess during the lesson and so pupils are a little confused about their progress and what they have to do to improve their work. Equally, teachers' subject knowledge occasionally lets them down. Teaching assistants do a good job in supporting pupils with specific learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good, with some outstanding features. It has been recognised locally as an exemplar of good practice. Pupils' academic development is well promoted by the broad range of activities; such as, by using basic skills across all subjects. As a result, pupils are becoming independent learners and making mature choices. The rich curriculum provides ample opportunity for visits and visitors to broaden learning in a wide range of subjects and, in turn, stimulate opportunities for the use of literacy and numeracy skills. The school works well with other schools and colleges and this is typified by the exemplary work within the physical education curriculum with the local sports specialist college. The school provides more activities out of school hours than are found in most infant schools. The personal and social support for pupils is good in developing their increasing maturity and sense of well-being. The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to learn effectively about their immediate locality and about cultural diversity of the wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Induction to the Foundation Stage is very good and gives the school a flying start in getting to know families well. Pupils, and their needs, are very well known and catered for and this receives strong appreciation from parents. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and overseeing their health and safety are robust and meet national requirements. Attendance is improving because absence is very thoroughly monitored. Child protection arrangements are up-to-date. Pupils' progress is very efficiently tracked, enabling the school to provide further support and guidance where necessary through extra provision and through target setting. Pupils know their targets and enjoy working towards them. The support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective in promoting their further progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher creates a very clear sense of direction and is well supported by all her staff. Her leadership is very effectively complemented by efficient school administration. School strategies for managing the leadership of subject areas are rigorous and meaningful. Subject leaders are given good opportunities to lead and develop their subjects; this contributes to the richness of the curriculum, for example, and the good progress currently made by pupils. School performance is effectively monitored and accurately evaluated. As a result, the school knows itself well and has a secure understanding of what it needs to do to improve. The outcome is a relevant school improvement plan that moves the school on. Parents and pupils appreciate the school's successful endeavours to provide a broad and lively education for all pupils.

Governance is effective. Much good and detailed work is done in committees and governors take their responsibilities seriously. They are well informed by the headteacher and staff, but they are too reliant on this information for their part in school improvement planning. School finances are well managed.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	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	3
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	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	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

Newlaithes Infant School

Langrigg Road

Carlisle

Cumbria

CA2 6DX

22 March 2007

Dear Children

Mr Cooper and I thoroughly enjoyed our time in your good school this week. We were very pleased to talk with many of you and very impressed by the friendly courtesies and help you provided.

What we really liked about your school:

- the really good work that is going on in the Reception class and the way that pupils make good progress there, particularly in developing social and literacy skills
- the good progress made by all children, including those with extra needs
- it is obvious that you have a good start in school because of the way that you enjoy the school and the work that you are given
- your good behaviour and kind help for others means that even the quietest are soon feeling welcome
- the important contribution that you make to the running of the school and the contribution that you make to the local community
- the good teaching you receive
- the excellent care and support that the staff provide and the way that this helps you build confidence and maturity
- the effective way that the headteacher leads the school and continually improves things for you.

You can help your teachers to make your learning even better by always doing your best work in all your subjects and by trying to improve on your previous work. We have asked your school to make sure that all lessons are really good all of the time.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

John Heap

Lead inspector