



# Fir Ends Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112420  
**Local Authority** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 289282  
**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Rosemary Rodger

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Smithfield
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Kirklington, Carlisle
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Cumbria, CA6 6AY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01228 675283
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	85	<b>Fax number</b>	01228 675283
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Gasgarth
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathleen Hetherington (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28–29 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 289282
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This very small primary school serves a socially mixed rural area between Longtown and Brampton. A very small number of pupils have a free school meal. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. There are two newly appointed teachers in Key Stage 2, one of whom is newly qualified. The school is led by an acting headteacher covering the recent absence of the substantive headteacher. The school has experienced considerable staffing turbulence in the past two years. The school has a part-time Nursery on site with 13 children attending every morning. About half of the pupils are bussed into school from outlying farms and villages.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Fir Ends Primary School is a satisfactory school which is emerging well from a period of inadequate progress in the past two years. Parents raised some concerns about the succession of supply teachers during that period, but are very happy with the school currently. The acting headteacher is committed to providing effective teamwork and motivating the staff.

Standards of attainment of children starting school in the Nursery are typical for their age. Children make good progress and achieve well in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement in Key Stage 1 is just satisfactory with all pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2, although very few reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics. Pupils achieve above average standards in English and science and make good progress in Key Stage 2. Standards in mathematics are below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being are good. Strong features include the good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and their enjoyment of school that is reflected in above average rates of attendance. Arrangements to care, guide and support the pupils are satisfactory. Some of the health and safety requirements are newly established and there are some gaps in the records for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Teaching is good. The permanent teachers recently appointed to teach in Key Stage 2 are making a palpable difference to learning in their classes. They have good subject knowledge, and are familiar with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote good learning. In these classes, excellent use is made of assessment information to help pupils understand what they have learned and what they need to do next. The curriculum is satisfactory and effectively enriched by visits to places of historical interest and preparation for the world of work. A review of the curriculum is underway to tackle those subjects that previously were not fully covering the National Curriculum requirements and to reduce the repetition of some topics in the past. The school offers a very limited range of out of school clubs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is well supported by the local authority following past problems that are now being tackled well by the calm and reassuring presence of the acting headteacher. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve under the leadership of the acting headteacher. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. The school has a deficit budget as result of the large number of supply teachers employed in the recent past and is not currently giving value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the level of challenge for more able pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children's standards on entry to the Nursery are broadly typical for their age in all areas of learning. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage, so by the time they start in Year 1, standards are above average in reading and mathematical development and slightly above average in all other areas of learning. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Results in the most recent national tests, all pupils reached the nationally expected levels. The proportions reaching the higher levels were low in writing and mathematics.

Standards in Key Stage 2, in the most recent national tests, were above average in English and the school exceeded its targets for this subject. They were above average in science but below average in mathematics, although they were much better than the previous year due to better teaching resulting from support and intervention by the local authority. Current standards in mathematics are improving in Key Stage 2, as a direct consequence of good teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well included in lessons and make satisfactory progress.

Achievement is generally satisfactory throughout school. Useful home/school books keep parents well informed of their children's progress and enable them to be involved in their children's homework. The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute to their achievement. Key Stage 2 pupils are making good progress because they are taught well.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. This is a close-knit family school to which pupils enjoy coming. This is seen in their good attendance and behaviour. To quote a parent, 'At Fir Ends, the manners matter to the children'. Pupils take their responsibilities on the school council seriously and work to make changes to school, for example, to improve school meals. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles; they eat sensibly and feel safe in school. Due regard is given to the health and safety of the children, who say they feel safe in school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to learning and interest in lessons. The skills and talents brought to school by the recently appointed Key Stage 2 teachers are having a good impact on improving attention to pupils' learning in lessons. Whiteboards are used well to display what

pupils are expected to learn. What pupils have learned is effectively shared and discussed at the end of lessons and sometimes pupils discuss their learning with others. Humour is used well to engage the pupils. Teaching assistants play a crucial role in the Foundation Stage. They are effective and support and encourage young learners very sensitively. The use of mathematical games and challenges contributes well to enthusiastic learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum gives good priority to the basic skills. It is currently under review. Good use is made of visits to places of historical interest and to an environmental centre to develop pupils' ICT and artistic skills. Older pupils are taught simple first aid procedures and understand the importance of eating healthily. Pupils' develop a good awareness of the world of work through their links with the local judiciary and visits to the cathedral. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are satisfactorily provided for now that their individual education plans are in place. There are a very limited number of after school clubs that pupils would like to see increased.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a safe haven for the pupils. Those spoken to valued their teachers more than anyone else in school. The arrangements to safeguard the pupils are robust and meet government requirements. In conjunction with the local authority, the school has recently reviewed and improved its health and safety arrangements. Risk assessments are carefully kept. The school works satisfactorily with parents and other agencies to ensure pupils make progress, although some of the records relating to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are not up to date. Day-by-day assessment is used well in lessons and pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and review their learning at the ends of lessons in some classes. The systems to track the progress of pupils over time have recently lapsed and there are gaps in pupils' records. A half-termly assessment programme has been introduced recently and is successfully addressing this shortcoming.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The acting headteacher provides good leadership. There is a strong sense of teamwork and mutual support throughout school. Two recently appointed teachers, including a newly qualified teacher, are making a good impact on disseminating good practice and supporting other teachers, some of which occurs on an informal basis. The acting headteacher has set about restoring systems with rigour and has a clear sense of purpose. The school is managed efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis. Parents commented warmly on the work of the school secretary. The acting headteacher has reviewed and is implementing the rapid improvement action plan required by the

local authority alongside the school improvement plan. Several omissions in statutory requirements, for example in the curriculum, have been addressed. The governors, although supportive of the school, have not tackled this aspect of their role with sufficient rigour because of the time taken to deal with the staffing turbulence in the past two years.

Self-evaluation was completed by the acting headteacher. Consultation with all those involved has been limited. The governors had no involvement in the process until this term. There are some key areas not evaluated, most critically the steps to promote improvement since the last inspection. The inspection judges improvement to be satisfactory because standards in mathematics are improving, pupils have improved their skills in ICT and some informal monitoring of teaching and learning takes place. The school improvement plan and linked action plans completed by subject leaders provide a clear sense of the direction for school improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

Fir Ends Primary School

Smithfield

Kirklington

Carlisle

Cumbria

CA6 6AY

28 November 2006

Dear Children

What a busy two days I spent in your school! Thank you so much for all the help you gave me and especially for your politeness and helpfulness around school. You all enjoy your school very much. The things that are really good about your school are listed below.

- You work hard and enjoy coming to school.
- You are encouraged to think about your learning and remember what you are expected to learn in Key Stage 2.
- You have been lucky to link with other schools and be involved in art and ICT work in the Lake District.
- Some of you have met a High court judge and the High Sheriff. How about that?

The staff and governors have been asked to do a few things to improve your learning. You can help too by continuing to work hard all the time and tell your teachers when you are stuck.

- Improve your mathematical learning so you achieve higher results in your yearly tests.
- Provide those of you who find work too easy with much more challenging work to do.
- Make sure that those of you who find learning hard have good plans to support your work.

Thank you again and good luck for the rest of the term.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector