

Netherton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112137
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	301722
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Earley

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Derek Thornthwaite
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Dixon (Acting HT)
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2003
School address	Netherton Maryport Cumbria CA15 7LT
Telephone number	01900 812709
Fax number	01900 812709

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school near the centre of Maryport. It serves an area of high social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a small number of pupils learn English as an additional language. There is a small number of looked after children. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are below those expected for children of their age.

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 school, which gives good value for money. The school has some outstanding features. When children start school in the Foundation Stage their standards are below those expected for children of similar ages. They make a good start and achieve well so that by the time they enter Year 1 standards are in line with what would be expected for their ages. Good progress and achievement continue in Key Stage 1 leading to significantly above average standards by the end of Year 2.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, providing a firm basis for their good academic progress. Pupils feel safe, enjoy coming to school and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. Although attendance is below average, it is improving. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community and are very well prepared for their future economic well being.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that work is well suited to pupils' abilities and lessons are usually lively and interesting. This makes pupils want to learn. Teachers and support staff work well together, particularly in support of pupils who have additional learning needs and looked after children, so that all pupils make good progress. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Teachers do not always make clear what pupils need to do in order to improve their work. The curriculum is good. It is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra curricular activities that promote learning. It is well planned with a good focus on literacy and numeracy. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend skills in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. There are good links with outside agencies to extend learning.

Care and guidance are excellent. This is a very caring school where pupils and their families are well known and highly valued. Pupils grow in self esteem and approach their work confidently. All procedures for safeguarding and child protection are in place. Assessment and tracking systems are very rigorous and are used well so that pupils have clear targets for improvement.

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and staff and governors share a determination to raise standards and improve provision. The school carefully places issues in order of priority. This leads to good standards, good achievement and excellent personal development, care and guidance. Subject leaders are beginning to extend their involvement in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Most governors know the school well and are supportive and new governors willingly undertake training in order to improve their skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to use skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects in order to extend learning.
- Improve the marking of work so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are significantly above average. Most pupils, whatever their ability or background, make good progress. This is because teaching is good and excellent personal development provides a very firm foundation for learning. The school makes good use of assessment and tracking to set clear targets for improvement.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are below those expected for their ages. They achieve well and make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 standards are in line with what would be expected nationally.

The school's results in the 2006 assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly above average overall, as they have been for the last three years. School data show that in the current Year 2 achievement and progress are good even though there is a large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this group.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. These form a very firm foundation for the good progress made by most pupils. Most pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They eat healthily and have extra opportunities to exercise; such as, the 'shake and wake' sessions. Pupils say that they feel safe, well looked after and enjoy their learning. Relationships are excellent and pupils have high self esteem. Parents admire the way in which the school fosters confidence and independence. Pupils help to look after others through the 'buddy' system and the school council ensures that pupils' opinions are listened to and acted upon. The poor attendance of a small group of pupils, whose parents do not ensure that they attend regularly, leads to below average attendance. Strategies implemented by the school are leading to improvements. Pupils make a very good contribution to the wider community. For example, they are successfully involved in local festivals, perform for senior citizens and raise funds for charities. The high expectations of staff lead to very good behaviour. Pupils are very well prepared for their future economic well being because basic skills are taught well and there are lots of opportunities to learn about the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and result in pupils making good progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this helps pupils to approach learning with confidence. Teachers make good use of assessment in order to ensure that work is well suited to different abilities and learning styles. Typically, lessons are lively and interesting and conducted at a good pace so that pupils are interested and sustain their concentration. Teachers and support assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked after children and the small number who learn English as an additional language so that all make good progress. Marking does not always indicate what pupils need to do in order to improve, leading to some missed opportunities to extend learning. Lesson objectives are usually

shared with pupils and returned to at the end of lessons, enabling them to check on how well they have done.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and this helps pupils to achieve well. It is enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities, which help to extend personal and academic development. The very wide range of extra curricular activities, visits and visitors help to make learning exciting so that pupils want to learn. The school makes effective use of specialist teachers from the local secondary school to increase skills in sports. After school clubs, such as French and choir, are very popular. There is a close focus on the development of literacy and numeracy and ICT skills although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend these skills by using them in other subjects. The curriculum is well adapted to individual needs and ensures that personal, social and health education give pupils a good understanding of how to lead healthy life styles. Good links with outside agencies help to extend the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care guidance and support are excellent. This is a very caring school, with a very warm family atmosphere, where each pupil is highly valued. A parent commented that teachers, 'have patience and time for every child they look after.' The school provides a very high level of support for all pupils. This helps them to reach challenging targets and contributes significantly to their personal development. For example, the 'feelings board' helps adults to quickly identify any pupils who may have worries. This is enhanced by the work of the learning mentor and the strong links with outside agencies. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are effective and the school carefully follows government recommendations for safeguarding children. Parents are very pleased with the care shown by the school and are confident to approach staff should they have any concerns. Systems for assessing and tracking progress are very rigorous and used very effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and maintains the very clear vision for improvement created by the headteacher. She is very experienced and knows the school well, resulting in a smooth transition of responsibilities during the absence of the headteacher. Staff work well together as a committed team to create a warm, challenging and inclusive community leading to good standards, good achievement and excellent personal development. There is a clear determination to leave no stone unturned to provide the best for each pupil. The school evaluates its performance well in order to make improvements and this is linked closely with the good school development plan. The budget is managed astutely in order to support the drive to raise standards and issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Parents are positive in their views of the school and take advantage of the many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents come into school to talk to pupils about their jobs. Subject leaders know their subjects well and are beginning to further develop their skills in checking teaching and learning in order to make improvements. The governing body provides good support. Many new members

willingly take on training to improve their skills in holding the school to account for its performance.

Strong leadership, a shared commitment to improve and realistic appraisal of performance give the school good capacity to improve.

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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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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

21 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Netherton Infant School, Netherton, Maryport, CA15 7LT

Thank you for making me really welcome when I came to visit your school. Your school is good and some parts of it are very special. I was very pleased to learn that you all know about the importance of plenty of exercise and healthy eating to help you to keep fit. I was also very pleased that you all get on so well together and that you understand that each one of you is very important.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- there are lots of good lessons and some very interesting clubs, visits and visitors to school and this makes you want to learn
- your work is good and you all try your best
- everyone in school is very caring and the buddies and the school council do a good job in helping to look after others
- your teachers keep a good check on how well you are doing so that they can help you to improve your work.

These are some of the things I would like the school to do better:

- I would like teachers to plan work so that you make more use of your reading, writing, mathematics and computers in the other subjects so you get better at them
- when they mark your work, I would like your teachers to tell you what you need to do in order to improve.

I really enjoyed watching your 'shake and wake' exercises. You all enjoyed taking part in them and were ready to start work afterwards.

Thank you again for making me so welcome.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead Inspector