

Kirkbride Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112114
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310787
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Andrea Tweddle
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Kirkbride Wigton Cumbria CA7 5JR
Telephone number	01697 351483
Fax number	01697 351483

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Kirkbride is a small rural primary school serving a number of villages and hamlets. Children's standards when they start school are broadly typical for their age but do vary from year to year and the local community contains some disadvantage. All pupils are White British and the proportion entitled to a free school meal is much lower than average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is higher than average. Integrated within the building is an established community learning resource centre and the school was awarded Extended School status in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kirkbride Primary School provides its pupils with a good education. Its success is due to the excellent vision and drive of the headteacher who is very well supported by staff and governors. It has a very strong caring, community ethos and parents are especially appreciative of the schools' work. A typical view is that, 'teachers are very approachable and caring. I feel as a parent my child is very lucky to be in such a lovely school'. Highly successful work has been developed with the community facility to provide specific skills for parents to support their children's learning.

The school works exceptionally well to nurture pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development from the point they join school. Pupils' enthusiasm, confidence and excellent behaviour throughout the day show they really enjoy school. They respond positively to direction, guidance and advice. The rate of absence is above average despite the staff and the welfare officer working hard to promote the benefits of full attendance. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the consequences of failing to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They make an excellent contribution to their community and their school council actively promotes the value of friendship and safe conduct. They are really well prepared for the next stage of schooling.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. They benefit from challenging teaching and very effective learning support to reach above average standards at the end of Year 6. This is the consequence of a range of successfully implemented strategies to raise achievement. A clear strength of teaching is in the careful planning so that activities closely suit individuals' interests. Lessons are usually stimulating and pupils work hard. However, work is not always sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils who could make more progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress towards their identified targets. Through an excellent curriculum and high quality care and support, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are quick to point out that adults are always nearby to offer help and support with any concerns or worries. Although pupils regularly receive very good guidance to develop their skills, advice on exactly how to improve is occasionally inconsistent.

Leadership and management are good. The governors, headteacher and subject leaders work tirelessly to ensure that the school derives good value for money. Governance is good and together all work effectively to check every aspect of schoolwork. The school has greatly benefited from the distinctive vision and imaginative bids for extra funding by the headteacher. The strong sense of direction has led to the school being a much valued, thriving community resource.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The excellent provision in the Foundation Stage provides children with the confidence to settle quickly and feel happy and safe. Many make very good progress because of the calm, well structured and rich environment. Teaching is often outstanding because of challenging activities, a variety of rich first hand experiences and effective learning support from staff and parent volunteers. Management is most effective in keeping the school up-to-date with current thinking about the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement for the more able pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware of their targets for improvement and exactly what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Work with a small number of parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Children's skills on entry vary year to year but are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception developing confidence and skills that stand them in good stead for later learning. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The 2007 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 revealed broadly average standards with improvements in writing. Assessments in Year 1 and 2 are now more accurate and reliable: the school has taken action to ensure all assessments are thoroughly moderated and externally validated. Progress is good in Key Stage 2 especially accelerating in Years 5 and 6 where some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. At the end of Year 6, overall standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Test results show a significant improvement in English, particularly for boys. However, not enough pupils reach higher levels particularly in mathematics and science. The careful monitoring of performance by the school recognised weaknesses in boys' writing. Effective action is raising achievement and standards of handwriting, accuracy and style of writing. However, the impact of improvement strategies is yet to be fully realised in Years 1 and 2. The good and often better achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is the result of 'fun' approaches, effective support and constant challenge in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. When responding to the world around them they show sensitivity, respect for each other and concern, for example successfully acting as playground buddies. They also have a very good appreciation of the natural environment, for instance taking responsibility for aspects of school grounds' development. Pupils really enjoy school and respond with great interest to the many exciting and varied learning opportunities available. This makes a significant contribution to their own personal development and is reflected in their excellent relationships and their considerate, safe behaviour. Nevertheless, attendance is broadly average despite the school's strenuous efforts to improve it. The problem is caused by the demands of the rural economy with a small number of families taking holidays in term time and is no reflection of the pupils' desire to learn, which is very good. Pupils say they feel safe and that very rare instances of inappropriate behaviour are promptly resolved. The school council plays a very important part in school life and members are rightly proud of the responsibility they have to help develop the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall with some outstanding teaching seen. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils are evident in lessons. Good progress results from challenging and often inspiring teaching which captures pupils' interest and energy. In the best lessons teaching is brisk, activities well timed and questioning probing. Occasionally, this pace and challenge is missing especially for the more able pupils. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and provide activities that are closely matched to ability and need. Practical activities that make learning 'fun' are used effectively to develop understanding. Pupils are successfully taught to reflect and analyse what they have learned. Well focussed guidance shows them exactly what they need to do to improve although the very best practice is not always consistently applied. Support staff and volunteers are a great asset in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent curriculum and takes full advantage of the specialisms the staff offer. As one parent remarked, 'the range of curricular activities offered by such a small team is impressive'. Pupils' learning experiences are extended through a range of excellent enrichment activities. Participation in after school clubs is high, for example in music and sport programmes. These are further enhanced by the Extended School initiative. Children in the Foundation Stage learn really well through first hand experiences both in and outdoors. Visits, residential experiences and links with businesses add to the strength of provision, for example performing on the stage of the Globe Theatre as part of the study of Shakespeare. Opportunities to develop business and enterprise skills are thoughtfully integrated across the curriculum. The excellent information and communication technology (ICT) provision is effectively used to enhance pupils' work. This prepares them well for later study and work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The family atmosphere permeates all aspects of school life and helps create safe, secure and welcoming environments. Procedures to safeguard children, with routines for child protection and health and safety, are fully in place. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified very early and they receive effective support. Excellent links with outside agencies and exceptional relationships with parents make a valuable contribution to the quality of care pupils and families receive. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and information used to set challenging targets to check overall progress. Despite some excellent practice, not all pupils are familiar enough with individual targets and exactly what it is they have to do to improve the quality of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The vision and determination of the headteacher ensures improvements in school add to the positive climate for learning in which all pupils can enjoy and achieve well. The headteacher, subject leaders and governors set appropriately challenging targets for improvement and closely monitor all aspects of school life. Their effectiveness is seen in the good progress made since the last inspection, for example the expansion of ICT resources for both pupils and adults. Review of any underperformance is perceptive and considered. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate though judgements are modest when gauging achievement and the quality of the curriculum. Equality of opportunity is good although not all of the more able pupils make as much progress as they could. The strength and quality of teamwork provides a good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	1
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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

27 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirkbride Primary School, Cumbria, CA7 5JR

Thank you for the very friendly welcome to your school and for being so helpful when I met with you. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your headteacher, staff and parents and joining you in your lessons and dining hall. You go to a good school.

When I spoke to you, you told me that you really enjoy coming to school and being with your friends. Your enthusiasm and interest in lessons and excellent behaviour shows that you enjoy school life. I was very pleased to see you getting on so well with each other. Your parents and carers also told me how really pleased they were with the way the school cares for you and makes sure any concerns or worries you have are dealt with promptly.

The recent national test results showed that pupils in Kirkbride School make good progress and are doing better than in previous years. In particular, your standard of writing is improving. This is good news and of course, everyone is very pleased. However, some of you could do even better in mathematics and science and I am asking your teachers to give you really challenging work. I think that some of you are occasionally unsure of how you can make your work even better. For this reason, I have recommended that teachers try to make sure that all of you know exactly at which level you are working in every lesson and what you have to do to improve to the next level. I have also suggested that the headteacher make checks to ensure this happens in lessons. Most of you attend school regularly but a few do not and miss some of the opportunities to learn and improve their skills. I have asked the headteacher and welfare staff to think of more ways of encouraging everyone to attend school regularly.

You have an important part to play improving your school. You can help by listening carefully to the advice of your teachers and support staff and by trying extra hard to produce the best work that you possibly can in all lessons.

I hope the school will continue to build on its successes and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead Inspector