

Great Corby School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112109
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325531
Inspection date	13 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	48
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Percy
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Mottram
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Great Corby Carlisle Cumbria CA4 8NE
Telephone number	01228 560399
Fax number	01228 560399

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress pupils make throughout the school
- the quality and effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of guidance and support provided to help pupils to make progress
- the effectiveness of leaders in promoting community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, analyses of pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaires and the school's documentation, and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving a rural village. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average; so too is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught as a Reception class during morning sessions. Each afternoon they join a class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. A third class covers pupils from Years 3 to 6.

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 and improving school. The excellent clarity of direction and purpose provided by school leaders is leading to good improvement in pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils love school; they attend well and are thrilled to take part in the many interesting activities and projects provided. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and its local community, and their behaviour is hard to fault. Parents unanimously expressed positive views of the school. One summed up its new direction as 'a perfect balance between care, fun and learning'.

Achievement is good. All pupils make equally good progress. Standards are rising although the small sizes of year groups lead to some variations. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current standards in Year 6 are above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Pupils in both year groups have achieved well compared with their average starting points, as they usually do. In recent years, all pupils have tended to reach the expected standard in the national tests at Year 6 with at least half of them reaching the higher level. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. They benefit from effective guidance and sensitive support provided by skilled assistants using a variety of helpful intervention programmes.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are reflective. They know that by taking part in a 'bad hair' day they are helping to fund other children to attend a local hospice. In their time at school, pupils make friends easily and become polite, courteous young citizens. They feel safe in the welcoming, caring ethos of this family school. Pupils value exercise and, through their good efforts, the school has been accredited as a Healthy School and awarded the Activemark. Pupils have a real voice in how their school can improve. School councillors have interviewed candidates for new staff positions and are currently involved in plans to improve the outdoor facilities. In addition, through various projects and visits, pupils are able to gain a very good understanding of life beyond their village.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils benefit from lively, engaging teaching that keeps their interest and enthusiasm alive. Lessons start promptly and pace is often brisk. Planning skilfully matches tasks to pupils' prior attainment and effective questioning challenges pupils to think quickly and clearly. Teaching makes good use of information and communication technology (ICT); this is much improved since the previous inspection and it enhances learning across subjects. A weakness in the teaching of writing is the over-reliance on commercial worksheets. This restricts opportunities for pupils to use their technical writing ability to express their thoughts and ideas independently.

The curriculum is good. It encourages pupils to become confident learners. The outstanding enrichment provided through visits, clubs, school partnerships and access to specialists adds significantly to pupils' good personal development. Pupils have recently collaborated with others from local schools on a Russian project. Some are visiting a national science centre in an urban setting, an excursion organised to support both their subject knowledge and learning about life in cities.

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection, risk assessments and safeguarding meet requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the excellent

partnerships with external agencies. Although target setting is used well to guide pupils' learning, marking lacks some consistency in identifying what pupils need to do to improve.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher, who provides the driving force for change, is supported well by a small but effective staff team. With clear outcomes of leadership showing in rising standards, developing teaching, and improving assessment there is good capacity for further improvement. Creative use of ICT, including text messaging, assists in excellent communication that parents appreciate. Governors contribute well to good monitoring practices. Consequently, self-evaluation leads to an accurate audit of the school. Leaders set challenging targets for pupils' performance and are determined to improve facilities on the premises despite the difficulties posed by the historic building. Leaders promote community cohesion well. They have evaluated initiatives designed to strengthen pupils' understanding of their place in the school, local and wider communities. Leaders' good impact on cohesion is best illustrated by an infant pupil's caption to a classroom painting, 'The blue is for the sky we share with the whole world'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Small year groups lead to variations in starting points. Most children are admitted with skills and abilities that are typical of children at this age. Teaching is good, learning is fun and basic skills are taught well. Children enjoy activities and make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time children enter Year 1 most are working at levels above average.

Children behave well, take turns, work collaboratively and play together well. They use tools carefully. They grow in knowledge of personal safety such as awareness of the danger of traffic. Planning successfully achieves a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. For example, registration is used by adults as a learning opportunity to sing about the days of the week. Child-selected gardening activities involving moving soil with a wheelbarrow help develop physical skills. A weakness in learning is that limited outdoor provision does not make it easy for children to be inquisitive and to explore in this setting.

Welfare arrangements are good. Well-trained staff support children effectively. Strong assessment practices developed by the staff team include excellent individual records of each child compiled in words and photographs. Individual needs are identified early and staff promptly access specialist support. Good leadership is based on a clear vision of improving provision further. Effective partnership with the Nursery provider ensures smooth transition across early years settings.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to write independently.
- Improve the outdoor learning opportunities for Reception children.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	2

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	1
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Corby School, Cumbria, CA4 8NE

Ms Packwood and I enjoyed our recent inspection of your school. Thank you for helping us. We enjoyed meeting you, talking with you about your school, visiting your classrooms and looking at your work. You were friendly and polite. We know you really enjoy school and were impressed by your outstanding behaviour and good attendance. These are the other things we found out about your school during our visit.

You attend a good school. All the people who work in school are doing a good job. Your school leaders know very clearly how they intend to make it even better. You are helping too through your excellent contribution to your school and its wider community. Your personal development is good. We know you value staying healthy and keeping fit. You told us that you feel safe and know how to get help. The staff provide you with good care. They organise effective support for those of you who need extra help quickly. You are given clear targets. Most of the time you receive good guidance on how to improve. We saw how keen you are to support a local children's hospice by enthusiastically coming to school with 'bad hair'. We know that you enjoy the good curriculum activities and opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills through visits from experts and by working with your friends in other local schools.

Your school leaders have devised a teaching and learning programme for you to follow that makes your learning interesting and challenging. You play your part by continuing to work hard in lessons. Consequently, you make good progress throughout the school. By Year 6, most of you have reached above average standards in English and science and well above average standards in mathematics. Well done!

There are two things the school could do better.

- Ensure Reception children have improved outdoor learning opportunities.
- Ensure teachers make less use of worksheets so that you have more time to write freely yourselves.

I wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector