

Maryport Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112135
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325537
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Gill Salter-Smith

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	108
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	Mrs Fong Dawson
Headteacher	Miss Christina Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Camp Road Maryport Cumbria CA15 6JN
Telephone number	01900 812074
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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 school situated near the town centre of Maryport. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic circumstances.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Maryport Infants is a good school and has some outstanding features. The care, support and guidance, and the curriculum are outstanding. The head teacher provides very strong leadership, and is well supported by staff and governors. Together they provide an environment where pupils grow in confidence as they develop new skills and learn to understand themselves and one another. In this highly nurturing environment pupils' achievement is good and their personal development is outstanding. Parents and carers are very pleased with the partnership the school has with them. They say that it encourages their involvement in their children's education. This contributes not only to the pupils' academic progress but also to their well-being.

Pupils feel very safe and secure and they are confident that adults will help them if they feel unhappy or upset. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of their feelings and emotions helps them to grow in confidence and enjoy school a great deal. Pupils like to learn and love to tackle hard work. Their excellent awareness of how to stay healthy is evident in their exuberant participation in the Freddie Fitt activity sessions. They make an excellent contribution to their own and the local community; for example, partnerships within the local area encourages the promotion of re-cycling and pupils also raise funds for local and international charities. Their ability and confidence to work together or independently, and their developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, prepare them extremely well for the future.

Good teaching helps pupils to make good progress in their academic work and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. The overall results of national assessments have been consistently above national averages for the past five years and standards have improved since the previous inspection, especially in mathematics. This is because the school has successfully concentrated on improving the assessment, teaching and resources used in the teaching of mathematics. The provisional results of the most recent national assessments indicate that above average standards have been maintained in 2008. The only area of relative weakness is in boys' writing.

Pupils respond well to good teaching. Relationships between staff and pupils are very supportive. Teaching is well planned and structured and takes good account of pupils' individual needs. The excellent curriculum is extremely well tailored to meet the needs and interests of individual children. The strong emphasis on drama and talk, together with the carefully structured programme to develop pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds, helps to raise standards further in reading and writing.

Self-evaluation procedures are in place. They are well used by senior leaders who accurately identify priorities, draw up action plans and monitor improvements. Subject leaders analyse pupils' progress and identify what needs to be improved although their role in checking up on whether actions taken have been effective is not yet fully developed. The rising standards, especially in mathematics, and the considerable improvement to the school environment since the previous inspection demonstrate a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

From levels of development that are just below those expected for their age when they start school, children make good progress and most reach the early learning goals in all the areas of

learning. Provision is particularly effective in personal development and results in children making excellent progress. Their progress in problem solving, and reasoning is good but they do less well in learning how to calculate. The programme to develop knowledge of letters and sounds has had a positive effect on children's development of reading and their confidence in writing, although writing remains a relatively weaker area of their development. The staff know the children very well and regular assessment is used to plan activities that interest the children and match their needs. A good range of activities is carefully planned for both indoors and outdoors. There is an appropriate balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children.

Parents and carers are very happy with the excellent way their children are cared for, supported and helped to settle in to school. Children enjoy the Nursery and Reception classes and settle very quickly into routines. Those needing additional help for learning or emotional difficulties are identified very quickly and provided with the support they need. The EYFS is effectively led and managed by the headteacher. High expectations of learning are well established. Priorities are identified accurately, and plans are currently being developed to provide more opportunities for improving calculating skills. The outdoor environment has improved greatly since the previous inspection and it is used well to support learning. The school has gained the local authority Kitemark for Excellence in Early Education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2 they reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, especially in mathematics. The national assessments for Year 2 pupils have been significantly above average overall for the past five years. The 2008 assessments indicate that these standards are likely to be maintained overall. The vast majority of pupils reached their challenging 2008 targets. The school's data on pupils' progress shows that pupils are making good progress and are on target to achieve challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's focus on improving standards in writing are raising standards although boys still lag slightly behind girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early and the school ensures they receive appropriate and effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is outstanding. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Pupils are very keen to learn new things and like to tackle hard work. They especially enjoy drama activities, talking and writing about the exciting things they do, and using practical resources in mathematics and science. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school. Pupils understand how to eat healthily and they thoroughly enjoy the regular Freddie Fit activity sessions. The popularity of the wide range of extra sporting activities reflects the pupils' eagerness to be active. They are keen to take on responsibilities and contribute to the school and the local

community. The Eco-Committee is very active. It helps to keep the school tidy and encourages re-cycling. Pupils' cultural development is good. They are very sensitive to the needs of others in different parts of the world. They recognise that not everyone is as lucky as themselves and eagerly raise funds to help out. Pupils enjoy finding out about people who are different to them selves. Recently they enjoyed Afro-Caribbean dancing and their participation in a week that focused on India. The pupils' good social skills, and above average academic standards prepare them exceedingly well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and help pupils to make good progress and achieve well. The very good relationships and support that adults develop with children and their families, help pupils feel happy and secure in class and ready to learn. Teaching and learning is well planned so that lessons are carefully structured and activities are designed to interest pupils and meet their varying needs. A good focus on using talk, role play and drama in the classroom helps pupils to be creative in their writing. They write confidently about what they have talked about or experienced. Pupils understand the purpose of lessons and increasingly are encouraged to decide if they have done as well as they can. Pupils enjoy doing this except on the few occasions when it is not explained clearly enough to them about how to succeed. Regular assessment of individual pupils' progress ensures that teaching focuses on filling in most gaps in learning. Occasionally pupils need more frequent guidance about how to improve their writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum meets pupils' interests and needs extremely well and leads to pupils' excellent personal development and good achievement. Activities that develop pupils' confidence and their sensitivity towards, and co-operation with, others underpin the work throughout the school. Learning is planned very successfully to ensure enjoyment and success. The successful approach to learning in the EYFS is continued into Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to have the chance to make decisions independently of an adult. The available activities are well planned and contain sufficient challenge to meet the pupils' different learning needs. A host of exciting events, such as the recent visit of a local cook, help to stimulate learning. The focus on drama, role play, speaking and listening and the introduction of the programme that helps children to link letters and sounds, is raising standards. The effectiveness of the curriculum is constantly under review and changes are made where deemed necessary. An example of this is the re-introduction of daily reading for every pupil which has boosted the quality of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Very positive relationships between adults, pupils and their parents ensure a warm, supportive and caring environment. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to the teachers and the support provided by all adults, including the learning mentor. The school plays a particularly positive role in supporting children who become unhappy. Much has been done to encourage regular attendance and the school works closely with a very small number of families for whom regular attendance is difficult. Pupils' who find learning difficult are given very effective support,

at times drawing on the expertise of specialist agencies. Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils meet government requirements. Health and safety policies are in place and risk assessment is robust.

Pupils' progress is carefully tracked, any potential underperformance is identified and pupils are given additional support. Partnerships with parents are excellent and contribute significantly to the pupils' progress and well-being. Parents are fully informed of their children's progress and appreciate knowing how well their children are doing and what they need to do next. Pupils, with the support of their teachers, identify a special target to reach; for example in literacy, numeracy or personal development. Pupils like having these targets and find them helpful although occasionally teachers miss the chance to use them as reminders of how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. Staff work as a cohesive team and are well focused on providing a safe and secure environment where pupils feel happy and secure and ready to learn. There is a clear focus on raising standards and improving provision.

Self-evaluation is good. Regular monitoring of provision by the headteacher, and of pupils' progress by subject leaders, identifies priorities for improvement, while the school improvement plan sets out the actions to be taken. The school is currently working on improving the criteria for success so that they are more sharply focused on pupils' learning. The role of subject leaders is being reviewed to ensure detailed monitoring of the effectiveness of the actions taken. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Pupils contribute well to the local community.

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 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**

19 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maryport Infant School, Cumbria, CA15 6JN

Thank-you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you, the staff, and the chair of governors, and looking carefully at the work you do. It is important that you know what I found out and have reported to your parents or carers.

Maryport Infants is a good school and parts of its work are outstanding. Your headteacher, all the staff and the governors work very well as a team to help you to do your best. The teaching is good and you make good progress. The activities the school plans that help you to learn and develop are excellent so that you enjoy lessons and hard work and your personal development is outstanding! Your school has a really special way of working with you and your parents to make sure that you feel safe and happy in school so that you are ready to learn. They are very quick to realise when you may need that little bit of extra care and attention or help. Staff make sure that they know your parents very well and they do a great deal to help parents and families if they need it.

There isn't a great deal to ask your school to improve. They do agree with me that some of the staff that organise the work in subjects need to watch out more for how changes and improvements have made a difference to the way you learn and make progress.

You can help by continuing to enjoy school and coming every day so that you don't miss any of the exciting activities.

I wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith (Mrs)

Lead inspector