

Ghyllside Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 112187 |
| Local Authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 325551 |
| Inspection date | 5 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Gordon Alston |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 457 |
| 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 Heather Dixon |
| Headteacher | Mr Mark Woodburn |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 February 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Gillinggate Kendal Cumbria LA9 4JB |
| Telephone number | 01539 773624 |
| Fax number | 01539 773625 |

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|--------------------------|-------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How well pupils achieve and the standards they reach in mathematics.
- The success of the school's efforts to provide a stimulating curriculum which promotes pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and challenges more able pupils.
- Pupils' personal development and the involvement of pupils in self-evaluation and target-setting.

Evidence was collected from observations of lessons and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. 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 above average sized school is in the centre of Kendal and admits pupils from the surrounding area, part of which experiences significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than that found in most schools. There is a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of the Nursery and Reception classes. There is before and after-school provision for children aged three to 11 years of age which is run by a private provider and was inspected separately by Ofsted.

Ghyllside Primary has gained Healthy Schools, Eco School and Artsmark Awards and has achieved Investors in People recognition.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ghyllside is a good school that successfully promotes excellence and enjoyment in all areas of its work. Good leadership has created a harmonious learning environment where pupils clearly feel very secure and happy. The school has a very good reputation locally and welcomes parents as partners. Parental support is extremely high with very positive comments about many aspects of the school. Parents say it is welcoming, provides their children with a very good blend of care, moral values and respect, and ensures that they gain in confidence, progress well and reach good standards.

Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage below those typical for their age, current Year 6 pupils leave school achieving slightly above average standards. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, where standards are rising and are currently average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement from Years 3 to 6 is good. By the end of Year 6, standards are slightly above average overall, although higher in literacy than in mathematics. The school has recognised this and has introduced a number of initiatives to remedy this and these are beginning to impact positively. Good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to progress as well as their classmates. The school has put a number of initiatives in place which are proving successful in challenging more able pupils ensuring they make good progress, for example, with extension activities in mathematics.

Teaching and learning are good because staff spend much time considering how best to interest and motivate their pupils to learn effectively. Teaching strengths include the emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence, presentations that capture pupils' interests, and lessons that move along at a brisk pace. Support assistants make an excellent contribution to the success of lessons and are well briefed about their roles in lessons. Opportunities are given for pupils to evaluate their own work and to be involved in planning the next steps in their learning and pupils are clear about how they will achieve their targets. Work is regularly marked and teachers generally indicate how pupils can improve.

The curriculum is rich, broad and well balanced and now extends pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It is suitably adapted for pupils of all abilities and provides an excellent programme of personal development. Parents and pupils speak enthusiastically about the wide range of extra activities and clubs. An ongoing revision of the curriculum is successfully linking subjects and making learning even more creative and meaningful; this is an area the school is still looking to improve further. A number of successful global links have been established and these are beginning to support the leadership's aim of providing a 'world-awareness' curriculum.

Pupils comment, 'school is a great place to be it helps us to learn and how to get on together'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very sociable, very well behaved and extremely happy in school, saying that their teachers make learning great fun and always encourage them to try their best. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and very positive. Pupils' enjoyment of school shows in their willingness to talk about their learning and in the good quality of work in books and on display. Attendance is above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Several links to schools in other countries and to schools with pupils from different cultural backgrounds have been forged. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of good nourishment and a healthy lifestyle. All the required measures for safeguarding are in place to minimize any risks to ensure

pupils' health, safety and well-being. Pupils say they feel very safe and know there is always an adult they can talk to if they feel troubled. In addition to providing excellent pastoral guidance, the school ensures that individual targets are set to help pupils to improve academically.

The quality of leadership and management is good. A shared philosophy that 'every child really does matter' and can achieve highly is the glittering thread that runs throughout the school; all are included and equality is extremely well promoted. Senior managers' checks on the work of the school are rigorous and they use the information from monitoring well to make an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and to target specific areas for improvement. This gives the school a good capacity for improvement. The school is always looking to improve its procedures. However, the newly introduced system of monitoring pupil progress has not yet proved to be fully successful in providing detailed information on how well groups of pupils are achieving in order to then judge the progress of individual classes. The contribution made by governors is good; they give freely of their time to support and hold the school to account. The school has many valuable links with the local and wider community and has done much to formulate its policy to promote community cohesion. Pupils have their ideas promoted through the school council and the school involves itself in lots of local events such as Kendal in Bloom and Kirkland Festival.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills below those typical for their age. Although they make good progress, attainment is still a little below average on entry to Year 1, especially in communication and language. They are eager to learn and settle quickly in the safe, secure environment. Strong staff teamwork provides excellent welfare arrangements and parents are very pleased with the support and care their children receive. Good leadership ensures that teaching is of a good quality. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the skilful use of questions that reinforce children's learning while at the same time developing their confidence and self-esteem. Children really enjoy the stimulating problem solving activities that make learning fun for them. They play and learn happily and cooperatively both indoors and in the well planned outdoor area, busily exploring the exciting array of stimulating learning activities provided by the exciting curriculum. Thorough assessment and monitoring of each child ensures that they make good progress in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete the review of the global aspects of the curriculum and extend the current work being done on developing a more creative curriculum.
- Embed and refine the newly introduced procedures for checking on pupil progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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

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| 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 | 3 |
| 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**

8 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Ghyllside Primary School, Cumbria, LA9 4BJ

I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your excellent behaviour and the way you all get on so well. You made it very clear to us that you are proud of your school and enjoy learning because it is such a happy and safe school. We found that your school gives you a good standard of education that is getting better all the time.

Some of the things we judged to be especially good are:

- your excellent attitudes to school, your respect for each other and your enthusiasm for learning
- the excellent way in which the adults in the school care for you and do all they can to help you make good progress
- the way in which your teachers have worked so hard to improve the school
- the good teaching you receive helping you to learn and get on well together
- the way in which you contribute to the life of the school and your community.

I am sure your teachers always say 'This is good but you could make it even better if you...' Well, this is what I am telling your school. To be even better, it needs to focus on creating an even more creative range of learning experiences it provides for you so that you enjoy school even more. I noticed that your school has recently introduced a new way of keeping an eye on the progress you make. It is working well on checking how well you are doing individually but it now needs refining to oversee how well the whole class is achieving.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Alston

Lead inspector