

Kingmoor Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112229
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325558
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Herd
Headteacher	Mrs Rosie Watling (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
School address	Little Close Lowry Hill Carlisle Cumbria CA3 0DU
Telephone number	01228 607561
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kingmoor Junior is an average sized school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Of the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds none are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. In September 2008, the school received children from a nearby school that closed, creating a wider social mix.

The school has experienced a number of changes in leadership over the past five years. The school is currently led by an experienced acting headteacher who took up the post in September 2008. The governors are in the process of appointing a substantive headteacher.

The school shares the site with Kingmoor Community and Business Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kingmoor Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Through a period of unsettled leadership staff have maintained a safe, caring and supportive environment where pupils are very happy, enjoy learning and make the progress expected of them. The vast majority of parents who expressed a view are highly supportive of the school's work. Comments typical of many are, 'A great hard working team who provide a safe happy environment for the children to learn and develop' and 'I am completely satisfied with the school and recommend it to others.'

A well balanced curriculum enriched by an extensive range of extra-curricular activity helps pupils to develop secure basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), and to achieve considerable success in creative areas such as music, sport and art. The good range of experiences provided by the school, including a carefully planned programme of personal, social, emotional and health education helps pupils to develop into articulate, sociable young people who show respect for one another and adults and take on responsibilities seriously. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and know if they have any difficulties that adults will help to sort them out. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay healthy is evident in their enthusiasm for sport and physical education and their understanding of healthy eating. Pupils make a good contribution to their own community. They enjoy being a 'buddy' to a younger pupil or a pupil new to the school or being on the school council. Pupils learn the importance of good behaviour, regular attendance and team work and as a result, are well prepared for their futures.

Pupils start school with above average standards, make satisfactory progress in line with national expectations and by the end of Year 6 maintain above average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science are closer to average. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons include a good variety of activities that interest pupils but they do not always provide enough challenge for more able pupils. Learning targets and marking do not always provide enough guidance to pupils on how to improve. Occasionally, pupils' behaviour is less well managed and learning slows down.

The good levels of care and support provided by the school are evident in the great care taken to help pupils new to the school to settle in, and in the well tailored help and support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The acting headteacher has worked swiftly and effectively with staff and governors setting a clear agenda for the immediate future that identifies the right priorities and focuses clearly on improving provision and achievement further. The role of subject leaders in taking full responsibility for improving pupils' progress and the quality of provision is currently underdeveloped. Many new systems are recently established such as performance management, more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6, and more robust monitoring and evaluation but it is too soon to see the impact of these on pupils' progress. Improvements already made in standards in mathematics and the accelerating progress in Years 3 and 4, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lessons provide challenge for all pupils, especially the more able.
- Improve the use of learning targets and the usefulness of marking to more fully support pupils' learning.

- Develop the role of subject leaders in taking greater responsibility for pupils' achievement and the quality of provision in their areas.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils' standards are above average. Pupils start school in Year 3 with above average standards. Most pupils make progress in line with national expectations and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English and mathematics. Standards are closer to average in science because fewer pupils reach above average levels. The 2008 provisional national test results show a slight dip in results in line with the prior attainment of the pupils. There are strengths in music, sports, art and ICT. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn the importance of behaving well, working hard and attending whenever they can and this stands them in good stead for future success. Through being encouraged to work in pairs or small groups, pupils develop good skills of cooperation. Responsibility is fostered through the expectation that pupils contribute to daily duties around the school and play a good part in contributing to the community of the school, for instance through their roles as school councillors, team leaders, or as members of the Eco committee. Daily, whole-school assemblies provide excellent opportunities for celebration and spiritual enrichment. They are characterised by extensive involvement of pupils, joyous music and well respected moments of quiet and reflection. It is clearly evident that pupils enjoy coming to school. Every pupil inspectors talked to confirmed this fact and every parent who expressed a view also agreed. Playtimes are especially looked forward to, being characterised by healthy and often vigorous activities. Pupils' enthusiasm for after-school sporting activities and competitions provides further evidence of their awareness of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. Most pupils demonstrate a good awareness of keeping safe, and helping others to do so by behaving sensibly and showing a good degree of consideration for one another. There have been a small number of instances of misbehaviour over the past year which the school has handled effectively.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy lessons and relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive so that children are eager to learn. Teaching is especially effective when lessons move at a brisk pace, there are high expectations of behaviour and learning and pupils are engaged in a variety of interesting and worthwhile activities. In these lessons teachers demonstrate their understanding of how pupils learn, for example, by using probing questioning to encourage pupils to think out problems or explain concepts. There is sensitive support for pupils who need extra help and well informed teaching assistants make

sure that these pupils participate fully in lessons. However, there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching. Although teaching is well-targeted to pupils' needs in some classes, challenge for more able pupils is not always evident. Planning does not always identify clearly enough how more able pupils will be challenged and what they will be expected to achieve. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the written comments are encouraging but they do not always show pupils how to improve and they rarely ask pupils to respond. Some pupils find their learning targets for writing and numeracy helpful, but they are not referred to often enough so some pupils forget them or do not think about them as they work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and is extensively enriched through a broad programme of visits and visitors and an imaginative and much enjoyed range of after-school clubs and activities. There is a suitable focus on promoting numeracy, literacy and ICT skills though not every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English. What particularly adds to pupils' enjoyment of school is the fact that although a good amount of time is dedicated to numeracy and literacy, it is not at the expense of other subjects. Pupils achieve considerable success in music, art and sports. Teachers recognise the way learning in one subject can contribute to learning in another and this is reflected in planning for topic work. A Year 5 music lesson, for instance, focused on pupils' feelings as they listened to a classical composition about a river (The River Vltava by Smetana) thus complementing the same pupils' studies of rivers in geography and the words such as 'current' and 'flow' they were practising in handwriting exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The physical care and support of pupils is good, as is the guidance they receive in their personal development. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are properly observed. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Many systems to check the progress of pupils and to ensure they are always suitably challenged in their classwork are relatively new and not always used to best effect by different teachers. In addition, assessment details of pupils joining the school (other than from the infant school) have proved elusive to locate. Pupils are being set increasingly helpful and realistic targets to help them improve their work but there is disparity in the way teachers stress their importance and this means that some pupils remain unsure of what their targets are. When pupils are identified as experiencing difficulty in keeping up with expectations good support is quickly given. This often involves the contributions of the many professionals from outside the school with whom the school works very closely.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

During a prolonged period of unsettled leadership at headteacher level, staff have worked well as a team to provide a caring and supportive environment for pupils.

Since the previous inspection more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 has started to accelerate progress, and the school has worked steadily to raise standards in mathematics.

The recently arrived acting headteacher gained the confidence of the staff quickly. The acting headteacher, governors and staff have worked together to identify the right priorities for improvement. These are correctly focused on putting systems in place to improve the effectiveness of teaching, leadership and management and raise achievement further. An example is the recently developed performance management system that is linked to the school's priorities and appropriate targets for pupils' academic performance.

The role of subject leaders in taking full responsibility for improving pupils' progress and the quality of provision is underdeveloped. Plans for more rigorous and consistent approaches to monitoring and evaluation at all levels of leadership and for providing opportunities to share best practice in learning and teaching are in the early stages of implementation.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and as they develop links with specific classes are increasingly seeing the school at work first hand. Many are new to the role and are keen to undertake training and work alongside staff, parents and pupils and the community to develop a shared long term vision for the school.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion providing good opportunities for pupils to visit and develop awareness of cultures others than their own. Governors and senior leaders show a good awareness of how community cohesion will be fostered and further developed.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	1
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingmoor Junior School, Cumbria, CA3 0DU

Many thanks for making the inspection team and myself welcome in your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about your school. We think that your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education.

It was good to hear about how much you enjoy the many music, art and sporting opportunities. Your singing in assembly was a joy to hear. Your enthusiasm for staying healthy is a credit to you. Your school does a great deal to help you to develop into sensible young people with a wide range of interests who know how to behave well, who cooperate well with each other and who take on responsibilities conscientiously. We were very pleased to see how everyone had welcomed and supported all the new pupils who came to the school recently. The teaching helps you to make satisfactory progress in your academic work. I know that you really appreciate your teachers and the way they help you to learn. You reach above average standards in the national tests in Year 6, although standards in science are not as good as in English and mathematics.

All the staff work hard to make sure that you are happy and safe in school and well cared for and supported. The acting headteacher with the support of all the staff and governors is working hard to help make your school an even better place to learn and enjoy yourselves. We agree with the school that it needs to concentrate on improving some areas of its work. These include:

- ensuring that you are fully challenged in lessons especially those of you who are capable of reaching the highest standards

- making the best use of your literacy and numeracy targets to help you to improve

- making sure that the way your work is marked is really helpful to you and

- involving more leaders in finding out what more needs to be done to help you all to do your very best.

You can help by keeping up your good attendance and continuing to behave well. Try to remember your own targets when you are doing your work and remember the advice teachers give you when they mark your work. I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at Kingmoor Junior School and wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector