

Fir Ends Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 112420 |
| Local Authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 337930 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 July 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Onyon |

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

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|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 114 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dr A Edgar |
| Headteacher | Mrs S Hatt |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 November 2006 |
| School address | Smithfield Kirklington Carlisle CA6 6AY |
| Telephone number | 01228 675283 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons. A number of shorter visits were also made to classrooms to look at, for example, samples of pupils' work. Eight members of staff were observed teaching. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, parents and carers, and pupils and looked at a wide variety of documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation documents, assessment records, safeguarding and health and safety information, and the reports from the School Improvement Partner. The responses given on questionnaires from staff and pupils were analysed, as were the responses from 60 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' current attainment in English and mathematics and the quality of learning and progress throughout the school
- the consistency of teaching, including the use of assessment, to determine how effectively it meets the needs of all pupils
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils, in particular those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able
- how effectively leaders are bringing about identified improvement.

Information about the school

Fir Ends is much smaller than most primary schools. It is situated in a rural location to the north east of Carlisle. All pupils are White British. A very small number are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to than found nationally. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of children in the Nursery and Reception Year. The school has gained Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Fir Ends is a good school. A number of aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The school cares exceptionally well for its pupils, who thrive in the nurturing family environment where they feel very safe. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. Outstanding partnerships promote learning and pupils' well-being extremely well. At the heart of the school's good progress is the excellent vision and drive of the headteacher. All staff share her ambition. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly satisfied with provision. 'The school is focused on wanting the very best for each child,' and, 'This is a lovely, caring, learning school,' are comments that summarise the views of the vast majority.

Children start with skills at levels broadly expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6 their attainment is above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Initiatives employed by the school have accelerated pupils' progress and significantly improved writing and mathematics skills and these are no longer a weakness. Progress in reading is not as strong. Teaching is good. Assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils who need additional support and help. Although marking is regular and encouraging, the next steps for pupils to take are not consistently identified to boost achievement further. Variable opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own and others' work and to consider how they might improve.

The school is a vibrant, stimulating and secure learning environment. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning and each other. Attendance is above average. A thoughtfully designed curriculum provides for pupils' personal development and basic skills really well; for example, pupils have an excellent grasp of how to stay healthy and take on considerable responsibilities within their school community, successfully broadening the experiences of those who have limited experiences beyond their local community. The school does not monitor the impact on pupils' learning of the links between subjects in the curriculum.

Effective self-evaluation procedures enable leaders to have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas which need further development. The impact of the concerted action taken is evidenced in the continuous improvement in achievement, attainment and attendance. Governors are committed and supportive. Good partnerships with parents and carers, and excellent links with support agencies and local schools, enhance provision. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for continuing improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the current improvement in progress across the school by:
 - ensuring that strategies for raising attainment in reading continue to be implemented and evaluated
 - developing a more consistent approach to the way pupils evaluate their own performance and understand what they need to do to improve
 - closely monitoring the outcomes for pupils in all aspects of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils' learning and performance in lessons is good overall. The most able are successfully challenged in most lessons. In the Year 5 and 6 class, for example, pupils enjoyed the challenge of writing their own reports about progress through the year. Inspection evidence indicates that progress is improving strongly and attainment is rising. In 2010 the targets for Year 6 were exceeded and attainment was above that found nationally. There is a strong focus on raising attainment in writing and mathematics and on the importance of making good use of assessment to identify underachieving pupils. Pupils' mathematical skills have improved this year, and their writing is better as a result of the impetus that a practical approach has given to learning. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities results in their being fully included in school life. This helps them to achieve well both in terms of their personal development and in their academic work.

Pupils' above average attendance is a clear indicator of the good levels of enjoyment they have in school. They work with a smile and gain great pleasure from doing their best. Pupils feel safe and have an excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles. They respond very positively to the many opportunities in school to take exercise, play sport and eat sensibly, benefiting from the school's commitment to healthy eating. They contribute enthusiastically as school councillors, adding to their sense of pride. Older pupils take seriously their roles as play helpers and make an excellent contribution to the warm and friendly ethos that pervades play times. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils develop good social skills and a mature grasp of right from wrong. They have a good understanding of their school and local community and their knowledge of cultures beyond their own is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Staff create a very positive climate for learning. They are hard working, enthusiastic and display secure subject knowledge. In the most effective lessons, first-hand, active learning captures pupils' interest well and they are encouraged to reason and explain their ideas or solutions to problems. In those lessons where progress slows a little, tasks are not always sufficiently enlivened to boost interest and push pupils to think for themselves. Assessment is good overall. Robust systems ensure that progress is regularly checked and any difficulties quickly identified and addressed. Oral feedback given by teachers is informative but the consistency and usefulness of written feedback is limited. Pupils are not always encouraged to understand how well they have done or to think about how they can best improve.

The curriculum places strong emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills and pupils' personal development. Subjects are increasingly linked together to provide more interesting learning opportunities. This includes the development of outdoor learning to enhance the achievement and enjoyment of all pupils, for example all pupils growing plants from seed to decorate the school's flower beds. The outcomes of learning, in all subjects, are not yet fully assessed. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn Spanish and are encouraged to apply their skills to solve problems and challenges more effectively. A good range of well-attended clubs adds to their interests, skills and experience.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and this helps all pupils to achieve success. Staff know children and their families very well. This includes those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable or those who face other challenging circumstances. Parents and carers are especially appreciative of the very high quality of

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care, pupils' enjoyment and the sense of family and of belonging that the school provides. Pupils report that staff are very quick to identify any inappropriate behaviour or concerns and worries pupils may have. Staff are highly skilled at supporting individual pupils and their families. Highly effective partnerships with specialist support agencies enable pupils to join all activities with their classmates.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has established a very positive vision for the school that permeates all aspects of school life. It is based upon the clear desire for all to do as well as they can. All the staff are fully committed to the high aspirations that have been established. Leadership capacity is being steadily strengthened and leaders demonstrate growing confidence in evaluating the impact of their actions on pupils' learning. Good relationships with parents and carers and excellent partnerships, particularly with local schools, make an important contribution to the continual drive to raise achievement. Robust monitoring and evaluation is reflective and self-critical. Consequently, self-evaluation is accurate. Assessment practice is being methodically addressed. The whole building provides rich, friendly and calm surroundings in which pupils' learning and development can flourish.

Governors make a good contribution to the drive and direction of the school. They challenge and hold the school to account in positive ways. Good procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. These all meet government requirements and child protection is especially robust. Management of risk is well established in the curriculum. Concerted action has been taken to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds make the same good progress and achievement. As a result, a pattern of good progress and rising achievement has emerged and is being sustained, confirming the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Community cohesion is positively promoted. A variety of links, including those with a school in Spain, provide pupils with an insight into the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the wider community, nationally and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |

| Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Very good induction arrangements help children to settle in to school life rapidly. Good relationships between children and staff quickly develop. These, together with a safe and secure learning area, mean that children feel confident to learn. Staff work closely as a team to provide a host of well-planned and relevant activities for the children. The good-quality outdoor learning environment provides many good practical opportunities for children to learn in a full range of situations. The provision is well organised and successfully enables children to make their own choices in learning as well as working under the guidance of an adult. Good teaching and effective leadership and management mean that children learn at a good pace in their time in the Nursery and Reception class. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well. Staff record and assess children's progress well. This assessment is used to plan effectively to meet the needs of individual children as well as keeping an eye on the overall progress of groups.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Almost 50% of parents and carers returned the questionnaire outlining their views of the school. The overwhelming majority of those were extremely positive about all aspects of its work. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed overall. Parents and carers

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might find it helpful to know that in relation to the very few concerns received, inspectors found that these issues were being effectively addressed and managed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fir Ends Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 45 | 75 | 13 | 22 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 48 | 80 | 12 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 45 | 75 | 14 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 45 | 75 | 14 | 23 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 42 | 70 | 17 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 36 | 60 | 22 | 37 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 44 | 73 | 16 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 42 | 70 | 16 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 41 | 68 | 17 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 37 | 62 | 19 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 33 | 55 | 21 | 35 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 44 | 73 | 12 | 20 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 47 | 78 | 11 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fir Ends Primary School, Carlisle, CA6 6AY

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when my colleague and I visited your school. We especially enjoyed seeing your 'Ugly Bug Ball' and sharing in your celebration assembly. We promised to let you know what we thought of your school. You attend a good school with some things in it that are outstanding. Your school gives you all a good start in life. It keeps you safe and takes care of you exceptionally well. You develop good social skills, learn to work and play together well and become kind and caring people. Your understanding of healthy lifestyles is clearly developing extremely well. You contribute extremely well to your school and the wider community. It was pleasing to see that you behave well. In addition, you attain well in your studies. Your headteacher and the staff do a good job. They work extremely well with partners to make things better for you. They are exceptionally caring and are doing their best to give you exciting and stimulating lessons. It was pleasing to see how hard you work and how much care you take with your work. Although you are all making good progress and you achieve well, there is still more to be done. To help this along, we have suggested some things that the school must do. These are to:

- continue to work with you to improve your reading so you can do even better
- refine further the opportunities you all have to understand how well you are doing and to think about how you can improve
- keep a closer eye on how well each of you does in all subjects.

You can help your teachers by keeping a smile on your faces and continuing to be a best friend to others. We wish you all the very best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Mr Michael Onyon

Lead inspector

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