



Kingmoor Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112230
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289209
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hether Drive
School category	Community		Lowry Hill, Carlisle
Age range of pupils	4-7		Cumbria, CA3 0ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01228 607560
Number on roll (school)	148	Fax number	01228 607560
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr I Jones
		Headteacher	Miss S McGaffin
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001		

Age group 4-7	Inspection date 3 October 2006	Inspection number 289209
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school mainly serves a residential area of Carlisle where socio-economic conditions are broadly average. Nearly all pupils are from White British families; the few pupils without English as their first language already speak English well. There is little movement in the pupil population. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kingmoor Infants is an outstanding school. It has a wonderful atmosphere in which pupils are respected, valued and inspired to learn. As a result, pupils achieve extremely well and gain very high standards year after year in all subjects by Year 2. This gives them an excellent basis for their life ahead. Consistently high attendance shows how much pupils enjoy coming to school. Indeed, they love their school. They appreciate the excellent rapport with all adults and the safe, supportive environment. Parents echo these sentiments and were unanimously positive about what the school does for their pupils. 'My son is privileged to have such a high quality start to his education,' one wrote.

The success behind the high standards in all year groups, including the Reception year, lies largely in the quality of teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and so motivate the pupils very well. There is a high level of challenge in each lesson to suit pupils of all abilities so that they can work at their own level. Pupils openly accept that work is hard but say that they do not have a problem with that. Lessons are also fun, especially as pupils are encouraged to learn by discovery. The sheer number of adults, including very effective teaching assistants and many willing parents, is a major influence on pupils' learning. Classrooms are vibrant and exciting places to be.

Pupils are so self-reliant and responsible that it is easy to forget how young they are. They take on jobs seriously and very effectively, whether handing out fruit or looking after younger pupils at the lunch table. They fully appreciate the benefits of a safe and healthy lifestyle.

A particular strength of the school lies in its rich curriculum. Teachers work very hard to link subjects together so that the learning experience is vivid and put firmly in context. The multi-activity afternoons are feverish affairs with pupils strongly focused on fascinating activities, such as converting computer designs of pizzas into textile collages or the real thing. There are plenty of other exciting activities after school, as well as many visits and visitors, such as an evacuee from World War 2. However, the school does not make the best use of its grounds to improve pupils' awareness of the environment.

The leadership of the headteacher is decisive and enlightened so that the contributions of all staff, especially the senior staff, as well as governors are not only valued but an intrinsic part of the school. The school has a very accurate if rather modest view of itself and has the right ideas to keep it on an even keel. The school has improved very well since the last inspection. To maintain its high standards alone is extremely impressive, but it is clearly not content to rest upon its laurels. Therefore, it has excellent capacity to improve and provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the school's grounds to maximise opportunities for pupils' learning, especially in environmental science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

It is the hallmark of this school's success that all pupils achieve consistently well in each year group. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is their second language. When children enter the school, their general skills and abilities are average for their age, although their language skills are slightly better. Highly effective teaching enables them to make swift progress through the Reception year. Most children reach the goals expected of them, and many exceed them.

The situation is exactly the same in Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in the national tests are significantly above average, year after year, in all the main subjects. This is impressive. The progress of the current Year 2 pupils shows that the pattern is likely to continue. In addition, pupils perform equally well in all subjects, including science and information and communication technology (ICT).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love their school, which helps to explain why attendance is consistently high. They throw themselves wholeheartedly into their work and are eager to do well. Consequently, their behaviour is excellent and they get on with one another and adults very well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are certainly very responsible individuals. Year 2 pupils are watchful 'buddies' to younger pupils on the playground, for example. School council members meet regularly and decide on school matters. They have even been known to request the presence of the Chair of Governors to answer their concerns. The extensive basic and social skills of all pupils make them outstandingly well prepared for their life ahead.

They appreciate that exercise is good for their health and say that they enjoy the sport after school. Younger pupils are not yet fully aware of the value of healthy food, and some of their lunch boxes did not enlighten them. However, older pupils are much more knowledgeable and are vigorous in championing a good diet. Pupils are extremely safety conscious. Even children in a Reception lesson showed considerable control when manoeuvring at speed in the hall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

There is outstanding teaching throughout the school. Among the many strengths that produce such excellent learning are the stability and like-mindedness of staff which provide a rich continuity of learning. The enthusiasm and knowledge of the teachers automatically motivate the pupils. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils,

reinforced by excellent planning for pupils of all abilities. This in turn produces a veritable hive of activity in each classroom.

Teachers group pupils very shrewdly so that they all receive constant challenge commensurate with their abilities. Adult support is impressive and influential, and another vital part of the school's success. Each group of pupils usually benefits from very good close support and guidance from teaching assistants and parents. Plenty of encouragement and praise rapidly build pupils' self-esteem. The in-built opportunities for pupils to discover things for themselves guarantees that learning is well-founded and secure.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is both comprehensive and inspiring for all pupils. There is understandably an ever-present focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Yet these subjects are rarely taught in isolation and are strengthened by links with other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils strengthened their speaking skills by discussing key parts of a French horn and violin before designing and decorating their own instruments.

In addition, there is an equally strong focus on every subject in its own right, enriched by a dynamic approach that might involve, for example, acting out the Easter story in full costume. There is a host of activities, visits and visitors to broaden pupils' horizons, and pupils even perform in public occasionally at a large local venue. The school's grounds are not extensive but the school does not make enough use of them to develop the outside curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The systems for safeguarding pupils are very secure and regularly updated. The informal care for pupils by all staff is especially strong. This is first-rate, simply part and parcel of the school. Parents refer to 'the caring, compassionate nurturing attitude of the staff', and they are right. In addition, the school has done extremely well to work with parents, offering training where appropriate, and this has had a direct impact on pupils' well-being, as well as their progress. It is not surprising, therefore, that parents think very highly of the school.

Teachers have a very thorough overview of pupils' progress. Comprehensive tracking systems give a very clear picture of strengths, weaknesses and trends over time. As a result, teachers are able to set specific, relevant targets for each pupil to improve their work and pupils are well aware of these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

A particular strength of the leadership and management of the school lies in its corporate approach. This is spearheaded and fostered by the excellent leadership of the headteacher. Her enlightened philosophy of education, shared by all staff, has ensured consistently high standards and a high level of care. She is a decisive leader but also delegates responsibility very effectively throughout the school.

Consequently, the senior staff are also excellent: very knowledgeable, perceptive and eager to improve further. Governance is very good. Governors are very active, very supportive and know their school extremely well. They take decisions with the pupils' best interests at heart although they do not necessarily hold the school to account vigorously enough for all of its actions.

The school knows itself inside out and so its plans for improvement are very good. A close watch on maintaining standards ensures that there is no hint of complacency. The school is not a slave to every educational initiative, but weighs them up wisely and absorbs what will obviously benefit the school. This augurs very well for the future.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 the learners' needs?	1
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

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Kingmoor Infant School

Hether Drive

Lowry Hill

Carlisle

Cumbria

CA3 0ES

3 October 2006

Dear pupils

I am writing to thank you for all your help during my visit to your school. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, as well as seeing you in action in lessons and around the school.

I think your school is excellent. You are very fortunate to have such fine teachers that you make outstanding progress and do extremely well in your work by the time you leave the school. Teachers make lessons exciting and interesting, but they also make you work hard, and I know you don't mind that. You do well in all the many subjects that you learn, and you are really well helped by all the adults, especially in your group work.

I understand why you love coming to school and I am very impressed by your attendance. I know that all the staff take particularly good care of you so that you feel very safe there. You also learn very quickly how to behave very well, look after one another and how to lead a healthy life through sport and good food. I especially liked the way in which you happily throw yourselves into work and take on jobs so seriously. Your parents should be very proud of you and you might like to thank them for their support both in class and at home.

Your teachers, including your excellent headteacher, work very hard to make sure that the school is successful year after year. They are always looking for ways to make your school even better and think carefully before changing what clearly works for you. However, I think the school could make more use of the grounds as an outdoor classroom to help you learn more about the environment, in particular. You could help by suggesting ways of doing this, perhaps through the school council.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector