

Kirkbampton C of E School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112252
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289220
Inspection date	9 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Isherwood HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Cawley
Headteacher	Miss Joan Routledge
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2002
School address	Kirkbampton Carlisle Cumbria CA5 6HX
Telephone number	01228 576377
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school, situated in the village of Kirkbampton, to the west of Carlisle. The area served by the school is socially and economically advantaged. Pupils are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds. A number of families live outside the immediate locality. All pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When children start school, their skills are broadly typical for children of this age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'My child has settled very quickly and is making great progress'. This sentiment, expressed by one parent and echoed overwhelmingly by others, goes a long way to explain why Kirkbampton is an outstanding school with the potential to be even stronger. The school has made rapid progress since its last inspection; as a consequence, it gives excellent value for money. It is very well thought of in the community and there are outstanding partnerships with other schools and agencies.

Kirkbampton has a strong family feel and a caring nurturing ethos. It strives with great commitment to provide only the best for its pupils. Relationships are highly productive. Each pupil is well known by the teachers and looked on as an individual. As a result, pupils approach their work with confidence, high levels of self-esteem and are not afraid of learning from their mistakes. Pupils reach high standards, achieve very well from the moment they enter the school and make impressive gains in their personal development. This is because of consistently strong teaching, an excellent curriculum and exceptionally high levels of care and support for individual needs. Pupils are eager to come to school, behave very well and are enthusiastic to learn. They comment openly that they feel safe and are well supported in lessons. They have a strong awareness of keeping fit and eating healthily through a wide range of opportunities and activities.

A significant factor in pupils' high achievement is the consistently strong teaching from the Foundation Stage to Year 6. Teachers are skilled in planning an interesting range of activities to capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. Lessons are invariably challenging and meet the objectives well. Teaching is often characterised by lively questioning, stimulating debate and high expectations. Teachers manage pupils well through praise and encouragement. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and make excellent progress. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics. Standards in science are exceptionally high because the specialist teaching is highly effective and well delivered.

The success of the school is underpinned by the highly effective leadership of the headteacher who ensures that staff and pupils are truly valued. She is very well supported by the commitment and the good teamwork of teachers and governors. Everybody pulls in the same direction, the views of all stakeholders are sought and actions are focused well on raising achievement further. For example, senior teachers have correctly identified that teachers could do even better by broadening the range of teaching styles to enable pupils to be more actively involved in their learning. They are also aware that systems to promote and share good practice in teaching and learning need fine tuning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Broaden the range of teaching strategies in lessons to stimulate pupils' greater involvement in learning.
- Agree principles of good practice in teaching and how pupils learn.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The strong provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children settle quickly and make great strides in their learning. By the beginning of Year 1, many reach, and often exceed, the

nationally expected levels for their age. Although in previous years, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics, there was a dip in 2006 to below average. This was because the pupils' abilities were less strong than in other year groups. However, pupils' current work, as well as teacher assessments, shows that Year 2 pupils are working well above the level expected for their age and, given their starting points, are making excellent progress.

Work in lessons and in pupils' books, together with the school's own data show that progress is outstanding as pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, move through the school to Year 6. Pupils' test scores have been consistently well above average every year since the last inspection. Challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2 national tests are successfully achieved. Standards in science are exceptionally high, as reflected in the most recent validated test results for 2006.

Standards are equally high in other subjects. In music, for example, all pupils benefit from specialist teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and contributes significantly to their excellent progress. The school has an exceptionally strong ethos where every pupil is held in high regard and looked upon as an individual. The teaching of Christian values such as honesty, respect and tolerance is deeply embedded in the school's provision for personal development and pervade all aspects of its work. There is a tangible feel of everyone working together as a tightly knit family where achievements are shared and relationships are highly productive. Older pupils take good care of younger ones. As a consequence, pupils feel safe, have respect for each other and love coming to school. They display positive attitudes to learning, behave very well and have nothing but praise for the way they are treated by staff. They are actively encouraged to express their feelings and are fully consulted on a wide range of issues to do with school life. As a result, they are confident that they can influence decisions on a number of important matters, such as in the provision of additional play activities at break times and in choosing their own fund-raising charities.

Pupils have an extremely strong awareness of how to keep fit and healthy, by eating healthy snacks and by taking regular exercise. This is very effective because the school has regular contacts with parents who are encouraged to support this work at home. Gaining the Activemark award confirms the school's strong commitment to pupils' health.

Pupils' outstanding standards in basic skills, together with opportunities to take responsibility and use their self-help skills provide a firm foundation for their economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Well-planned, interesting lessons, with varied activities are keys to ensuring that pupils make rapid progress and are motivated to learn. Teachers are

skilled in their knowledge of individuals and in matching activities to pupils' interests and abilities. Tasks are invariably imaginative with a good emphasis on practical work with first-hand experiences. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 enjoyed investigating how they could improve a basic cake recipe by baking buns and in conducting a fair test to record their findings. Lessons are typically conducted at a brisk pace, have a clear learning focus and lively questioning keeps pupils on their toes. New learning builds successfully on previous work. As a consequence, pupils are motivated to learn and have good opportunities to share and discuss their ideas. They benefit greatly from the constant praise and encouragement they receive from staff. Pupils with additional learning needs make excellent progress because their needs are identified early and the partnership between teachers and classroom assistants is highly effective.

The school is not complacent. Despite the profile of strong teaching, senior teachers are aware that pupils' learning could be enhanced further if in some lessons teachers were even more confident to involve pupils more actively. They are also aware that, at present, the school's strategies to share and promote the best practice lack clarity and agreement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers an outstanding curriculum, which contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. It is carefully planned, and well balanced with a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The teaching of these subjects is made more meaningful to pupils through a good range of topics and themes, which are enriched by visits and visitors to the school. These often fire the pupils' understanding and imaginations and motivate them to learn. For example, trips to York and Beamish have provided an excellent stimulus for historical projects and have added greatly to pupils' enjoyment.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well organised and takes good account of the six areas of learning. A wide range of well-resourced practical activities helps children learn through experience, play and discovery. This means that children are engrossed in their learning and achieve very well.

The curriculum successfully supports pupils' ability to be healthy, stay safe and keep busy. For example, each day begins with a lively 'keep-active' routine for each class. This sets the tone for lessons getting off to a brisk pace with pupils ready to learn.

An understanding of issues beyond school is developed very well. For example, pupils are encouraged to put forward their own ideas for fundraising and have taken part in a Young Enterprise Initiative at a local school. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular provision, particularly in music and in sport. These are hugely popular and add considerable enrichment to the pupils' experience and to the personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils who state clearly that they are well looked after and feel safe. Staff are vigilant and responsive to each individual. Relationships at all levels are second to none. As a consequence, pupils are confident to discuss any problems with their teachers, safe in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. There is a strong culture of older pupils caring for younger ones. Year 6 pupils, for example, take great pride in acting as mentors to children in the Reception classes by helping them at lunch times and in the playground. Excellent communication with parents and local nursery

schools ensures that pupils settle quickly and are well supported from the moment they start school. Strong links with local high schools underpin the highly efficient arrangements to support the pupils' transition to secondary school.

There are very effective systems for assessing and tracking progress so that teachers are clear in knowing what pupils can do and what they need to learn next.

All required safeguarding procedures are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is successfully steering the school in the right direction. She is very well supported by able, hard working teachers, assistants and administrative staff. She possesses a clear vision, sets high standards and is passionate about pupils' learning. As result, standards are high in academic and pastoral aspects, and the school is reflective and forward thinking. In all actions, staff work together, put pupils first and are committed to raising standards further. Actions to improve are well thought out. There is clear agreement on how the school can improve further and plans of good quality are in place to drive the school forward.

The school is well supported by a committed and dedicated group of governors. They know the school extremely well and play an important role in helping to shape its direction and in holding it to account for its performance. As a consequence, and along with its other strengths, the school is very well placed to improve further.

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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?	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	2
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.

Annex A

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirkbampton C of E School, Kirkbampton, Carlisle, CA5 6HX.

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. I really enjoyed talking with you. You stated your opinions very clearly and they were very helpful to me. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

Firstly and most importantly, I would like you to know that you go to an outstanding school. You make excellent progress in your work and are very well taught and well looked after. I was impressed that you work hard and get on so well with each other. I was pleased to hear that you all feel safe and secure and thought that you have an exceptionally good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Miss Routledge and all the staff and governors work very hard to make the school as good as it can be and I am sure that it will continue to improve. To help with this, I have asked them to ensure that more of your lessons include opportunities for you to learn in different ways and that they become even more clever in sharing their ideas about how to help you learn. Perhaps you can tell them how you like to learn best.

It was a pleasure to spend time in your school and to see how well you are doing.

Keep up the good work.

Best wishes

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.