

Stannington First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122228
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359194
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joyce Mills
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Stokoe
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Stannington Morpeth Northumberland NE61 6HJ
Telephone number	01670 789276
Fax number	01670 789276
Email address	Helen.stokoe@northumberland.gov.uk

Age group	5–9
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2010
Inspection number	359194

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons, taught by three different teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked in detail at the following: the school's development plans and safeguarding policies; the school's data on pupils' progress and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. There were 52 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and scrutinised by the inspection team. Staff and pupils' questionnaires were also analysed during the inspection.

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

- The learning and progress of pupils to determine whether actions taken by the school to improve provision in writing have been successful.
- The use of assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress to ensure all pupils are challenged and supported.
- How effectively leaders and managers monitor, review and evaluate the impact of their actions on outcomes for pupils.
- In the light of the new management team, the school's capacity to improve.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized first school. More than half the pupils come from outside of the local village. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The school is part of the Forest Schools Initiative. It holds a number of awards including the Healthy School status, Activemark and Artsmark. The school runs its own breakfast club and offers a number of learning opportunities for families. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

The school hosts a nursery, which is managed independently of the school and did not form part of this inspection. A separate report for this provision can be found on the Ofsted website.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Strong relationships and good pastoral care result in pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Through the development of good partnerships, the school offers an increasing range of activities which pupils enjoy. Pupils comment positively on the creative themed weeks and special events such as 'Outlaws' Celebration Day' which capture their interest. Pupils spoke confidently about the contribution they have made to the school through their work as fundraisers and playground leaders. Their good awareness of how to stay safe, good understanding of healthy lifestyles and their good social skills means they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school's engagement with parents and carers is good and most are very appreciative of the work of the school and speak highly of the 'warm and friendly atmosphere' which pervades it.

Attainment is above average by the end of Year 4 and achievement is satisfactory. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage at a level which is typical for their age. Good provision in the Reception class means children rapidly become active learners and make good progress to attain above average standards by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress is variable from Year 1 to Year 4 being satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 2 and pupils reach above average standards in reading and mathematics. Their attainment in writing is not as high. This is because teachers do not always make effective use of information from assessments to plan sufficient challenge for more-able pupils, who could make better progress. The unevenness in progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is linked to variability in the quality of teaching. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 because teachers set a good pace to learning and expectations are high. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) because the pace of learning is slower and explanations lack clarity, so pupils are sometimes unsure about what they are expected to learn in lessons.

There have been several changes to the leadership of the school in recent months. Comprehensive self-evaluation by the new headteacher, staff and governing body has identified that improvements in teaching, pupils' writing and the use of data to tackle underachievement are necessary to raise attainment. However, actions to resolve concerns are not yet robust enough. Recent development of middle leaders' skills is enabling them to make a fuller contribution to evaluating the school's work. However, monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour. This has meant that teachers are not always sure how they can improve their practice and ensure pupils achieve as well as they should. Consequently, there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in Key Stage 1 by ensuring teaching is good or better, by:

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

- increasing the pace of learning to increase pupils' level of engagement
- improving explanations so pupils know when they have been successful.
- Raise attainment in writing by ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information to plan effectively for more-able pupils.
- Monitor and evaluate the school's performance more rigorously and take prompt action to make the required improvements.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most lessons, pupils enjoy learning and are active participants who are keen to succeed. They respond well in lessons and work hard to complete their tasks. Positive relationships ensure that pupils behave well, are friendly and helpful to one another and respectful to adults. Pupils feel safe in school and they know who to turn to if they have a problem. They talk enthusiastically about the interesting experiences the school offers them. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of physical activities provided and recognise this helps to keep them healthy and positively engaged. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a sense of reverence, as seen in the time for reflection and prayer in assembly and they have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are proud of the contributions they make to their school. For example, they act responsibly as house captains and actively support church and community events. Their good attendance and the good progress they make in developing their social skills prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Although pupils show good attitudes to learning, their progress although satisfactory overall, is variable as they move through the school. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average but has declined since 2009. This is because teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently and this slows the progress they make. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and pupils attain above average standards in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are not as high, particularly for the more-able pupils. As a result, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress due to the tailored support they receive. Although there is some variation in the attainment of boys and girls, there is no measurable pattern.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, teaching is too variable in quality to promote consistently good progress. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 because teachers promote a fast pace, have high expectations of every pupil and use perceptive questioning to extend thinking. Explanations are clear and this helps pupils to know precisely what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Teachers are skilled at intervening when pupils need individual support. They are quick to pick up any misconceptions in their learning and provide clear guidance to enable pupils to achieve well. Teaching lacks challenge in Years 1 and 2. As a result, the pace of learning is slower and the level of pupils' engagement less secure. In these lessons, explanations are sometimes unclear and, when this is the case, pupils are unsure about the focus of their learning. Throughout the school, lessons are generally planned well and resources, including computer technology, are used well to enrich learning. However, teachers do not always make effective use of assessment information to ensure the needs of more-able pupils are met.

There has been good development of the curriculum. Planning promotes links between different subjects showing how learning in one subject contributes to progress in others. As yet there are not enough opportunities to promote literacy skills across the curriculum. An extensive range of activities is available to pupils during the school day. For example, involvement in the Forest School Programme has provided pupils with exciting opportunities to learn about the natural environment and participate in challenging

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

problem-solving tasks. Pupils benefit from a good range of opportunities outside school. They talked excitedly about their enjoyment of residential visits to Robinwood and Carlton Lodge and their involvement in sports festivals. Good partnerships with external organisations and the parish church extend the curriculum. For example, pupils benefit from specialist support in areas, such as enterprise, music and sport.

The well-targeted care and support for pupils enable them to flourish in a safe and secure environment. The clear guidance which is given for behaviour, for example, is appreciated by all pupils. Close monitoring of attendance has enabled the school to reduce the number of persistent absences. Parents and carers are kept informed of their children's well-being and they receive good quality information about academic progress and their child's targets for improvement. Close work with external agencies means that support for vulnerable pupils is rapid and involves a breadth of specialist expertise. Transition at all stages is a positive experience as teachers work closely with families and other schools to ensure pupils settle quickly into new surroundings.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher's success in sharing her ambition for the school is demonstrated by the good team spirit which has quickly developed. Leaders have begun to analyse data carefully and set challenging targets for improvement. However, they have not ensured that information about pupils' progress is used consistently well across the school. In addition, monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough and teachers are not given sufficient guidance on how they can improve their practice. Consequently, teaching is variable especially between Key Stages 1 and 2. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The school does not tolerate harassment in any form and ensures the school is an orderly community. To ensure full equality in learning, the school is tackling the needs of all pupils especially the more-able in writing.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body provides a satisfactory level of support but it is not yet using the information it holds regarding identified weaknesses, to question and challenge the rate of improvement. Safeguarding arrangements are good, with clear policies and secure risk assessment systems. Staff are thoroughly checked for their suitability to work with children. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Within the school and local communities it is particularly good but links with the wider community are at an early stage of development.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children join the Reception class with the expected skills for their age. There is some variation from year to year because of children's abilities and readiness to learn. Children make good progress and achieve well because adults are attentive, listen to the children and create conditions in which children feel welcomed. As a result, by the time they join Year 1 their skills are above average. Learning is vibrant and exciting, because staff motivate children well, ask searching questions and ensure a brisk pace in lessons. Parents and carers are very pleased with the start their children make. The good level of care given to children helps them settle quickly so they learn to work and play together in a safe and supportive environment. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated and benefit from good quality support. Adults make regular observations to plan the next steps of learning for each individual. Consequently, there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those from which children can choose. Children are generally confident, independent and willing to make choices. This was seen in the work they did as part of a team to build an imaginative den in the extensive outdoor learning area. Leadership and management are effective. Good, detailed plans are in place to develop provision further. Arrangements to meet the health, safety and welfare of the children are good.

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

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

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaires expressed positive views about the school. They feel their children are safe and well cared for throughout the school. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the new headteacher and the leadership and management of the school, and feel their children are well prepared for future learning. A small number expressed concern regarding the progress their children make and the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that the school works well to support individuals in handling their behaviour and that it is good. However, they agree that the progress pupils make is uneven as they move through the school, although it is satisfactory overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stannington First 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	69	15	29	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	38	30	58	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	42	24	46	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	54	22	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	48	26	50	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	58	20	38	1	2	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)	29	56	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	46	26	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	37	27	52	4	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	37	30	58	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	33	25	48	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	46	26	50	0	0	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 all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



10 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stannington First School, Morpeth, NE61 6HJ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed spending time with you and listening to your views about your school and why you enjoy learning. I was impressed with your good behaviour and the thoughtful way in which you look after each other. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and I was pleased to see how hard you work with your teachers and other adults. The staff take good care of you and many of you told me how safe you feel in school. You develop into confident, polite children with a good awareness of right and wrong. I was particularly interested by your work in the Forest School.

You go to a satisfactory school. This means that it does some things well but other things could be better. You make good progress in reception and in the Key Stage 2 classes. I found some of your lessons made you really think and work hard but they are not all like this. Although you achieve well in reading and mathematics, some of you do not do quite as well in writing. So that you can improve further, I have asked the school to:

- make sure teachers plan more challenging work for faster learners, particularly in writing
- ensure all teaching is exciting and challenging, with teachers matching tasks to your needs in all classes and making sure you know what you are expected to learn
- check more often in lessons on how well you are doing
- enable the leaders of your school to check closely on improvements to ensure you all do as well as possible.

You can continue to help by coming to school as regularly as you do, working as hard as you can and by helping each other in and around school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Margaret Armstrong

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.