

Holy Trinity Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122282
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359211
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Faed
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Groves
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 12 lessons and six class teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke with the School Improvement Partner. They analysed 64 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The inspectors also looked at development plans, pupils' progress and attainment data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, school policies and procedures, and scrutinised pupils' current and past work.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following.

- The progress of pupils in Years 1 to 4 and their achievement and attainment, particularly in the development of their writing skills.
- The extent to which all senior and middle leaders are demonstrating the capacity to bring about and sustaining a consistent pattern of improvement.
- The quality of teaching across the school and its effectiveness in raising attainment and accelerating the rate of pupils' progress.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school which serves Berwick and the surrounding areas. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free schools meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average with an above average proportion with a statement of educational needs. The school has gained the Healthy School status along with the Activemark and Eco School awards.

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

This is a good school which takes exceptionally good care of its pupils, because of the passionate commitment of the headteacher, skilfully supported by staff, to ensuring all pupils can achieve success. Parents appreciate just how much their children enjoy school and are kept safe. The comment, 'My child loves coming to school as the ethos is excellent.' sums up the views of the large majority.

Most children start school with skills typical for their age, although a few have weaknesses in their speech and language development. Attainment at the end of Year 4 is well-above average overall. Writing skills are well-above average as a result of teaching strategies that inspire pupils to think for themselves and be imaginative. Although this represents good progress from individual starting points, progress is especially quick in Year 4. Overall, good and occasionally inspiring teaching and effective support and intervention ensure pupils' achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and, in individual cases, exceptional progress, because expectations of what can be achieved are high and pupils are given the confidence to tackle challenging tasks.

At the heart of the school's work is a commitment to providing pupils with memorable learning experiences. The school's performing arts provision makes it a leader of what can be offered. This is reflected in the success and quality of public performances at the nearby The Maltings performing arts and media centre. The diversity that exists locally and in the school is celebrated successfully but opportunities to provide first-hand experiences of the diversity that exist nationally and globally are a little limited. Pupils report that they feel very safe. They demonstrate an excellent awareness of the advantages of keeping active and fit and being safety conscious. They take great pride taking on responsibilities and enjoy a strong voice in decision making. Behaviour is good with older pupils displaying exemplary attitudes towards each other and adults. However, in Nursery and Reception, children do not always develop self-control consistently. Excellent partnership working, such as with support agencies and sports providers together with the positive engagement of parents and carers, enrich the quality of pupils' learning.

School leadership accurately identifies school strengths and areas for continued improvement, although there is scope to sharpen methods to precisely identify the positive benefits that fresh initiatives and positive action have on children's development and achievement. A revitalized governing body is increasingly holding the school to account in constructive ways. Consequently, the school demonstrates a good and growing capacity to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen whole-school approaches to the evaluation of performance by:
 - developing systematic methods to pinpoint exactly what makes the difference to how children perform and achieve
 - increasing the rigour of self-evaluation to secure greater consistency in staff expectations of what children can achieve in Nursery and Reception.
- Extend the range of first-hand experiences to increase pupils' understanding of diverse cultures and beliefs in the national and global context.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils appreciate the many enjoyable experiences that are provided for them which enable them to become confident and independent pupils who achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress overall with rapid progress made in Year 4, because learning is made so stimulating. Accurate assessment ensures that pupils who require extra support, help and challenge are promptly identified and activities are tailored to meet their specific needs. Those pupils who face significant barriers to their learning achieve well. By the end of Year 4, attainment is well-above average and rising. Positive action has been taken to eliminate inconsistencies in achievement, for example, improving writing skills to augment achievement across the curriculum. Similar successful action is boosting achievement in mathematics. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils achieve higher levels, because thinking skills are well developed, enabling pupils to consistently apply their skills and solve problems.

Their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in their sense of enjoyment, pupils' respect for each other and their keenness to participate in artistic and sporting activities. Older pupils provide excellent role models showing much consideration for those around them although younger children occasionally lack a little self-discipline. Pupils thrive on the responsibilities that are given to them to improve their school, manage healthy lifestyle initiatives and protect the local environment. Their high rate of attendance and well developed life skills prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their learning.

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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	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	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Good and sometimes inspiring teaching captures pupils' interests and helps them to achieve well. In those lessons when the rate of progress is fastest, expectations of what can be achieved are high and staff shape innovative approaches to promote high-quality learning. As a result attainment is rising because staff give pupils the confidence and self-belief to build on their understanding and think for themselves. When learning pace is slower, expectations of concentration span are not as high. Assessment is accurate and each pupil is given a set of prompts to help them improve their work.

Excellent use is made of themes and the local resources to provide more interesting learning, for example, recreating the Viking raids on the nearby Holy Island and along the River Tweed. The strong emphasis on personal development, especially in Years 1 to 4, is reflected in the very rich programme of artistic and sporting activities. For example, in the gym, exploring movement and space to music which creates moods firstly of fear and then calm. Extremely well thought out approaches using the local environment enables all to grasp the local traditions and contribute to establishing their 'green' credentials. Really good use of local links to celebrate difference and respect for each other, such as in the Circle of Peace remembrance event.

Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that pupils get the best out of what the school offers and successfully contributes to their high rate of attendance. This includes those potentially vulnerable pupils and those from challenging circumstances. Outstanding

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links with support agencies enable targeted support for individuals to be highly successful, enabling all pupils to participate fully in visits or be active in events, for example, playing steel drums. Personalised approaches, such as amongst potentially vulnerable pupils, enable all to steadily build and develop their skills.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and determination of the headteacher has been central to the good improvement since the last inspection. This can be seen in a more consistent pattern of pupils' progress, rising attainment and the effective use of assessment. Secure systems are now in place to check pupils' progress, although the analysis of the information is not always sufficiently searching. Recent changes in the composition of the governing body demonstrate the school's commitment to continuous improvement. For example, senior leaders have taken positive action to improve the quality of learning in Nursery although the full impact of staff changes has yet to be realised. Although monitoring is systematically undertaken, approaches to evaluate performance do not always identify what exactly makes the difference to the learning outcomes. Consequently, there are some inconsistencies in what children can be expected to achieve, such as in their personal development while in Nursery and Reception. This hinders the push towards ensuring a consistent pattern of high-quality practice.

Safeguarding procedures are good with good practice in place to keep pupils safe with all requirements met. The school has audited its good contribution to community cohesion. However, it recognises that despite the strength of its work in the local community, the direct experiences that pupils encounter of the diversity of cultures and beliefs that exist in the world are limited. Much thought and care is taken to make sure pupils of all backgrounds share the same positive experiences. This can be seen day-to-day and reflects the commitment and sensitivity of staff to equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination.

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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	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
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

Children settle quickly, happily and confidently to make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children are working securely within the goals expected for their age. Facilities, both indoors and outdoors, are spacious and offer ample opportunities for children to instigate and pursue their own learning. For example, when a group of boys successfully worked together to construct a den using bamboo cane, tape and sheeting material. In the good learning observed, imaginative approaches combine thought-provoking adult questions and prompts well, to develop ideas and extend understanding. There are times when expectations of pupils' attentiveness are not as high as they could be, slowing the tempo of learning. For example, making certain all are listening carefully, sharing their ideas and answering in turn.

The good and developing leadership and management are evident in the reflective approaches and inclusive, caring practice of staff. Detailed observations of tasks, visits and events are regularly undertaken and compiled in a 'learning journey', adding to the richness of their learning. Parents and carers are given good opportunities to participate in their children's learning although opportunities are sometimes unused, for example, recording family events and activities. Good assessment practice is in place, although there is scope to use assessment information more methodically to personalise activities, for example, developing early speaking skills at an even faster rate for those learning English as an additional language.

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

Over one third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire which expressed their views of the school. A very large majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the education the school provides. They speak highly of the school's welcoming atmosphere and the exceptional care, guidance and support their children receive. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about instances of unacceptable behaviour in Nursery and Reception. Inspectors judged behaviour of younger children to be good overall during the inspection and observed teachers dealing with minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour competently.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Trinity Church of England 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 165 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	63	24	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	48	31	48	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	55	28	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	58	26	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	64	21	33	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	64	23	36	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)	34	53	26	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	53	27	42	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	33	36	56	1	2	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	39	31	48	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	37	58	24	38	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	69	20	31	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.



22 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Holy Trinity Church of England First School, Berwick-upon-Tweed
TD15 1NB**

I want to thank all of you for the very friendly welcome that you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We found the time we spent talking to you, your staff and other adults really enjoyable and helpful. We were impressed by your good and often excellent behaviour and your eagerness to learn. The school provides a good quality of education because you have a committed headteacher, hardworking staff and a dedicated group of governors. They are all keen for the school to continue to improve. They all take exceptional care of you. As a result you clearly feel safe and enjoy really friendly relationships with your staff. It was very apparent you understand how to stay safe and healthy. You can be proud of your good progress and rising attainment. It was evident from your comments that you appreciate the way your staff make your learning lively and interesting. Some excellent use is made of the many links your school has with the local community, sporting organisations and support agencies. Your parents and carers told me just how highly they value the enjoyment you get from school and the patience and persistence of your staff.

We have asked senior leaders to look at ways of checking exactly what makes the difference in any improvements you make and make sure all staff set the same high expectations for all children including those in Nursery and Reception. We have also asked that you are given extra opportunities to experience first-hand the different lives and beliefs of other people in the world around you.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope your school will continue to improve.

I wish you all a very bright future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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