

Scremerston First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122248
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359202
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr George Dance
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed three teachers. They held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's activities, in particular the teaching and learning in classrooms. They analysed the school's documentation, including that relating to the safeguarding of pupils and analysed the responses of 29 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the school set and use challenging targets to drive improvement in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 to determine the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The impact of actions taken to improve the development of independent learning in the Reception class.
- How effectively leaders and managers use the analysis of pupil outcomes as a means of self-evaluation and in setting priorities for improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average village primary school. Currently, all the pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although a well-above-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school shares its premises and works closely with pre-school provision managed by a private provider which is subject to a separate inspection. The school is currently involved in a building project which will provide a Community Centre for the village and accommodation for the pre-school. The school's intention is that this will extend the accommodation currently available for those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has achieved the Healthy School status, British Council International School, Eco Schools Silver, Activemark and Artsmark 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

Scremerston is a good school. It has several outstanding features. The school is highly successful in ensuring that pupils flourish in a cohesive school community and is rightly proud of the outstanding quality of its pastoral care. As a result, pupils' sense of community, their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and how to follow a healthy lifestyle are excellent. Pupils benefit greatly from the outstanding partnerships developed with parents, carers and other agencies. For example, parents and carers contribute very effectively to the development of their children's reading skills. The school's links with other schools and through their creative partnership have a very positive impact on pupils' attainment.

Good teaching and a good curriculum help pupils to achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils make exceptional progress in reading. In the main, assessment of children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is used effectively to set challenging targets for pupils to reach by the end of Key Stage 1. In some lessons, however, those pupils who enter Key Stage 1 with high standards are not provided with curricular opportunities which develop their independent thinking further or provide opportunities to follow challenging investigations. Standards in mathematics and writing by the end of Year 4 have improved in the previous two years and are above average, but are not yet at the same high level as in reading. While at least satisfactory and often good, pupils' progress is at times slower in mathematics. This is because the range of strategies to support pupils' progress is not as extensive as in reading. Pupils' writing is developing well in literacy lessons, but the same high expectations of pupils' writing are not always evident in all of their work.

The headteacher has a very clear vision that pupils will be happy, secure and achieve well. Well-focused self-evaluation strategies have been introduced to secure these aims. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly, but at times focuses more on pupils' engagement with their work rather than the impact of teaching on outcomes for pupils. As a result, although the school has identified areas for improvement accurately, its plans for development sometimes lack detail regarding the specific areas of teaching and learning which need to improve. Nevertheless, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. For example, it has improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage resulting in good outcomes for children. In this way, the school has tackled identified weaknesses and demonstrates a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 by consistently providing pupils with challenging, active and practical activities which help them to become independent thinkers.

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- Increase the rate of progress made by pupils in writing and mathematics further so that they consistently reach the same high levels as those attained in reading by:
 - – ensuring the marking of pupils' work consistently points to ways in which learning can develop further
 - – making it explicit to pupils how they can develop their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - – ensuring staff have the same high expectation of pupils' writing in all of their work.
- Improving the impact of leadership and management in driving improvement by:
 - – ensuring the monitoring of teaching is linked firmly to the outcomes achieved by pupils
 - – using a rigorous analysis of pupils' outcomes to plan future actions with clear and detailed targets for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

When children enter the school in the Reception class, their knowledge and skills overall are generally similar to those expected for their age. The small number of children in each year group means that this can vary year-on-year and, in some cohorts, the majority of children are able to work at levels beyond those expected. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their varying starting points. Pupils do best in reading; achievement in writing and mathematics is not as high. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, their attainment is above average. In those years when the majority of pupils entered the school above expected levels, attainment is high, for example, in 2009 and 2010.

Throughout the school, pupils contribute well to their learning by working hard and joining in enthusiastically with all that the school has to offer. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high levels of attendance. Because they find school a happy and safe place to learn, pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils express themselves confidently and frequently use a wide range of suitably expressive language. They concentrate well in lessons and persevere in their work even when they are not fully challenged by the tasks they are given. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the benefits of keeping fit, staying active and choosing a balanced diet. They are extremely safety conscious, for example, in observing the guidelines they have been given for safe internet use. All pupils are members of the school council and debate those things which are important to the harmony within their school and those issues which impact on the sustainability of the world in which they live. This contributes to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provides a firm basis for reflection and consideration of the contribution pupils can make to community cohesion in school and beyond.

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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	2
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?

Consistent strengths in teaching include good subject knowledge and very good relationships which succeed in encouraging pupils to be willing workers. Teachers' planning concentrates well on providing pupils with opportunities to consolidate their learning in basic skills. This is particularly successful in reading and pupils are provided with regular opportunities to read aloud and develop an excellent awareness of audience. Occasionally, particularly in Key Stage 1, the activities planned for pupils' independent work do not allow them to continue learning at a fast pace. Sometimes, staff are too keen to help pupils and do not give them enough time to think for themselves. In Key Stage 2, the marking of pupils work in literacy is used effectively to share with pupils the assessment of how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. This is less consistent in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics throughout the school.

An excellent range of enrichment activities, including a variety of visits and visitors, ensures pupils enjoy school. In the main, the curriculum is well matched to the different ages and levels of ability of pupils within each class. In mathematics, pupils are sometimes given mundane tasks which are not always tailored well enough to their needs and interests. This reduces the opportunities for active and practical learning. The school has made good improvement in planning opportunities for older pupils to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. It has been less successful in helping pupils to understand how these skills can be enhanced further in other subjects.

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The school makes excellent use of its small size to promote a nurturing family atmosphere in which the adults know the pupils extremely well. At the start of the school day, staff are on hand to greet pupils, parents and carers, who know that staff are always willing to listen to and act on any concerns. Parents and carers confirm that pupils' needs and any barriers to learning are identified quickly. Highly effective liaison with a range of specialist agencies then ensures that additional help is sought for any pupils who need this. The success of the support and guidance provided for these pupils can be seen in their good progress and the number who reach expected levels of attainment for their age by the time they leave the school.

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 consideration and care provided by the headteacher for the well-being of pupils and staff permeates the school's work and ensures high staff morale. Staff and the governing body share the same values that all children matter and that the school's work should centre on sensitive care and a consistent drive to improve further. The school's context is analysed carefully and every opportunity is taken to meet local needs and extend pupils' understanding of communities beyond the school. Through a wide range of first-hand experiences, pupils are helped to develop a very good understanding of how to live in harmony with others through a better understanding of those who are different from themselves. However, although the governing body is highly supportive and knowledgeable, it has not always checked that plans for improvement are challenged or that they are appropriately detailed. The school is effective in promoting equal opportunity and tackling discrimination. This is evident, for example, in how all pupils are welcome and that no groups make measurably less progress than their classmates. Due to current restrictions in accommodation, however, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have equality of access to the same high-quality resources normally seen in other schools. The school has good safeguarding procedures. Policies and procedures follow national guidance, although some up-dating is required. The strength of the school's provision can be seen in how well safeguarding is integrated into curricular provision and the impact which this has on pupils' outstanding knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.

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

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has good links with pre-school providers and excellent relationships with parents and carers; this helps the children to settle quickly into school routines. Children make good gains in their learning and development from their varying starting points on entry to the Reception Year, so that, by the time they enter Year 1, attainment is above average. Generally, children make fast progress in the teacher-directed activities in the classroom. This is because lessons are thoughtfully planned to engage children's interest and to help them to acquire new knowledge and skills. For example, in a communication, language and literacy lesson, good guidance and questioning helped children to recognise how they could use their knowledge of letters and their sounds to make good progress by writing sentences independently. Although plans for the activities which children choose for themselves indicate that all areas of children's learning are well considered, they do not sufficiently identify the intended outcomes for each child. This makes it difficult for all adults to provide quality intervention through discussion or questioning to ensure that provision consistently meets each child's needs. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. This has ensured that weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been in the main addressed successfully. However, limited accommodation and resources continue to limit children's ability to extend their learning through imaginative play.

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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

More than half of all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers were extremely positive about the school. All expressed high praise for the enjoyment of education provided by the school and for how well the school keeps their children safe. Parents and carers express confidence in how well the school supports those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Scremerston 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 inspector received 29 questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	69	9	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	72	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	62	11	38	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)	17	59	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	59	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	69	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	90	3	10	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scremerston First School, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2RB

Thank you for being so very cheerful, friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed my time in your school thoroughly. I found especially the discussions we were able to have about your work and how much you enjoy learning very interesting and helpful. Scremerston is a good school which has several outstanding features, which I would like to share with you.

- The school staff look after you extremely well.
- Your thoughtful and sensible attitudes and keenness to be at school are reflected in your high levels of attendance.
- You have an excellent grasp of how to stay safe and remain healthy.
- The school has outstanding relationships with your parents and carers and excellent partnerships with the local network of schools and support agencies.
- The excellent contribution which the school makes to community cohesion contributes extremely well to your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

By the time you leave school, the standards you reach are above average, although you usually do better in reading than in writing and mathematics. I have, therefore, asked the school to help you make even better progress in writing and mathematics so that you attain the same high standards as in reading.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you again for helping with this inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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