

Netherton Northside First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122211
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380425
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Ashdown

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Dixon
Headteacher	Sarah Smith
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. She observed teaching and learning in six lessons and saw two teachers teach. She held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. She observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, pupils' progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation. The inspector analysed seven questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether all pupils are making the progress of which they are capable from their individual starting points.
- The features of the school which support its own judgement that some aspects of its work are outstanding.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This first school is very much smaller than the average size of most primary schools. Pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. All pupils are White British. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but there is a larger percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs than is usually seen. The school has gained Healthy School status.

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. It has particular strengths in the excellent care, guidance and support it provides for pupils which contribute to their good personal development. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, behave well and are kind and respectful to each other, to staff and to visitors. They feel extremely safe in school and enjoy learning in an atmosphere of respect and trust. An emphasis on having fun, while learning, is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils are exceptionally well known as individuals, their views are valued and they are all given good equal opportunities to succeed. The school is at the heart of the dispersed rural community it serves. All parents and carers are entirely happy with the education the school provides. They, and many members of the wider community, show their support through their attendance at events organised by the thriving parent and teachers association and at the regular community lunches which take place in the school hall.

The school has maintained and built upon the good practice seen at the previous inspection and has good capacity to improve further. Improvements to the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the marking of work are contributing to pupils' good achievement. Through effective self-evaluation the headteacher knows the school and the needs of the pupils well and has identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. However, the role of members of the governing body is not yet fully developed in monitoring the work of the school.

Children get a good start to their education in the Reception Year and continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Attainment fluctuates widely from year to year as there is often only one pupil in each year group. Over the last three years attainment has usually been above average when pupils leave the school. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points because teaching is good. Teaching is lively and knowledgeable and gives pupils the confidence to succeed. In most lessons teachers use interesting resources and set work which is matched well to the needs of the mixed-age pupils. In a few lessons, where work is not as challenging and pupils have fewer opportunities to find out things for themselves, for example using information and communication technology (ICT), their learning slows, although it is never less than satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress further by:
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons is consistently challenging
 - giving pupils further opportunities for independent learning, research and problem solving
 - developing pupils' ICT skills and giving them more opportunities to apply these across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of school self-evaluation by:
 - developing the roles of members of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons pupils were seen to be enjoying learning and achieving well. In their mixed-age class they work well together, concentrate on the task in hand and are keen to succeed. In a science lesson, older pupils particularly enjoyed experimenting with light and shadow to find the most effective ways to illuminate their 'Batman' sign. An impressive range of pupils' work and photographs of their activities displayed on walls and seen in their books all confirmed the good progress pupils are making. Over the last three years children have generally entered the Reception Year with the skills typical for their age and usually reached at least average attainment in assessments at the end of Year 2. Current Year 4 pupils are on track to meet their targets and their attainment is above average. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are particularly well supported and have made good gains in their learning because they receive timely, sensitive and skilled support from both staff and pupils.

Pupils take responsibility both for themselves and for each other. They have a very keen awareness of how to stay safe but are still able to take sensible risks. They know how to stay healthy and all enjoy the home-cooked school lunches which are a focus for pupils' social development during the school day. Pupils have well developed basic skills, know how to cooperate and work well in teams. These qualities, combined with their good attendance and punctuality, ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life.

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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through enthusiastic teaching, perceptive questioning and tasks which are well matched to their age and abilities. Learning is checked regularly and pupils benefit from extensive and sensitive individual feedback on how well they are doing. This both enables them to improve their work and also builds their confidence in tackling the next steps in their learning. Learning is slightly slower in lessons which are not as briskly paced and challenging and pupils have limited opportunities to solve problems and work on their own.

The curriculum is broad and meets pupils' needs well. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills are used well but they have fewer opportunities to develop their ICT skills and apply these across the curriculum. The curriculum is extended and enriched by frequent trips and visits and by collaboration with two other small schools to provide joint activity days. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visit to another school where they agreed they had learnt many new things but had enjoyed circus skills and football the most.

The quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive is outstanding and ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school and have the confidence to learn effectively. Seamless transition arrangements ensure pupils move smoothly from one stage of their education to the next. Support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is excellent. All staff and outside agencies work together to ensure timely expert help and support is always on hand when needed.

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 headteacher has a very clear vision for the school which is fully shared by all staff. Morale is high. All staff have a firm focus on raising attainment and accelerating progress while ensuring that all pupils enjoy learning. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully against the challenging targets they are set. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school but are not yet fully involved in monitoring its work. All pupils are included in every aspect of school life and both boys and girls make equally good progress.

Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school has good links with parents and carers and regular communication between school and home ensures they are able to fully support their children's learning. Safeguarding policies are fully in place and show good practice. All staff are well aware of risk assessment and child protection procedures. Consequently, pupils feel extremely safe in school. The school promotes community cohesion well at all levels and is particularly successful in providing a focal point for the local community.

These are the grades for the 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	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	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 well into the Early Years Foundation Stage and quickly make friends with pupils of all ages. Although cohorts are extremely small and children's ability varies from year to year, most children over the last three years have entered the school with the skills typical for their age. They make good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in their personal and social development. By the time they enter Year 1 their skills are usually as expected for their age and sometimes higher in some areas of their learning. Staff work closely together to plan a good balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities and increasingly ensure Reception-age children have more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Although opportunities for outdoor learning are not quite as well developed as those indoors, children have access to a broad curriculum because they are fully included in a wide range of varied whole-school activities. In one school day they were seen making good progress in their learning as they enjoyed a specialist music lesson, made stick men and counted money. Children's progress is carefully monitored and staff ensure that all safety and welfare requirements are fully met.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers are completely happy with the education the school provides. They are particularly appreciative of the excellent care, guidance and support that their children receive and speak warmly of how much their children enjoy learning. Inspection evidence entirely supports these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Netherton Northside 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 7 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 7 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	100	0	0	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)	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	86	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	100	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



16 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Netherton Northside First School, Morpeth, NE65 7HD

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to all of you and hearing about all the things you enjoy doing at school. Please thank your parents and carers for filling in the questionnaire.

These are some of the things I have said in my inspection report.

- Yours is a good school where you make good progress and reach above average attainment.
- Children in the Reception class get a good start to their education.
- The teaching you receive and the curriculum you follow are good; the care, guidance and support you are given are outstanding.
- The leadership and management of your school are good.
- Your behaviour is good, you enjoy learning and you feel completely safe at school.

This is what I have asked your school to do now.

- Make your lessons even better by:
 - making sure you always work at a brisk pace and that all lessons challenge you to do your best
 - giving you more opportunities to solve problems and work on your own
 - giving you more chances to improve and use your information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- We have asked the members of the governing body of your school to check regularly on how well the school is doing.

You can all help your school to be even better by continuing to work with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely
Ann Ashdown
Lead inspector

