



Blyth Newsham First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 122261
LEA Northumberland

Inspection number 274823
Inspection dates 15 - 16 June 2005
Reporting inspector L A Furness

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	First School	School address	Warwick Street
School category	Community		Blyth
Age range of pupils	4 - 9		Northumberland
			NE24 4NX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01670353124
Number on roll	322	Fax number	01670 353124
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr G Davey
Date of previous inspection	9 - 12 February 2004	Headteacher	Mrs A Armstrong

Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 - 9	July 2005	274823

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Blyth Newsham First School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils attending Blyth Newsham First School are white British. They are taught in ten classes and a nursery. A small number of minority ethnic children speak English as an additional language. Most children come from the surrounding area. Attainment on entry is below that expected for the children's age. The proportion of children with special educational needs is about average. The school has had a series of acting headteachers over the past four years. A permanent headteacher and deputy were appointed in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

The school has made remarkable progress since its last inspection four terms ago, and its effectiveness is now good. This confirms the school's own view of how well it is doing. All the serious weaknesses have been eliminated, although the school acknowledges there is further to go in raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in making use of information gained through assessment. The newly appointed headteacher has played a significant part in the school's improvement. Her energy, enthusiasm and very clear understanding of what needs to be done have galvanised governors, staff, parents and children. Standards are rising throughout the school and children make good progress overall, even though there are some inconsistencies in the opportunities for learning within the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good, so children want to learn and try very hard to do their best. The children's personal development is excellent: they love coming to school and the care, guidance and support they receive are outstanding. The school is in a good position to improve further, building upon the improvements made so far. The school provides good value for money.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in ICT by planning for children to practice their ICT skills more
- Make more use of information from assessment to guide children's learning and to help them to understand what to do to improve their work further
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in provision in the reception year in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

When the children enter the nursery, their knowledge and skills are below those expected for children of this age. School data show that by the time they leave the Foundation Stage the majority of them have exceeded the learning goals expected. However, after observing the children and looking at their work, the inspectors judge that attainment is not quite so high, although they accept that it still represents good progress.

By the age of seven, the standards the children attain in English, mathematics and science match those expected for their age and are better than those of similar schools. More able children are challenged well and a higher proportion has exceeded the level expected for their age this year than in previous years. Children for whom English is as an additional language make good progress. Children with learning difficulties, also do well. Achievement is good.

The school is rightly concerned that children in Year 4 have not been doing as well as they could. Last year, these children were in a large mixed-age class and the work given was not always right for their needs. To rectify this, a range of good initiatives has been put into place and these children have made good progress during the year. However, the legacy of previous underachievement means that many are still attaining standards below those expected.

The ICT skills of the majority of children throughout the school are below those expected for their age. The children are making good progress but they have not yet had sufficient time to benefit from the significant improvement in resources and provision since the previous inspection. The interactive whiteboards are having a huge impact on children's acquisition and use of ICT skills, and on their learning in other subjects.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Children love coming to school and find it 'exciting and fun'. Parents confirm their children's enjoyment. Staff make children feel good and this results in confident children who are very proud of themselves and of their school. They work hard in lessons and always try to do their best. Behaviour is very good and the isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with fairly and quickly. Children are given many opportunities to take responsibility and to learn about working together for the good of the community. School council members say that their views are listened to and considered by the teachers. The children speak with pride and enthusiasm about their work in raising money to support different projects and about their ideas for a sensory garden.

Spirituality is developed very well through assemblies and other areas of the curriculum. Children reflect on and make good sense of the world in which they live. They show care and consideration for each other and the natural environment, and have a good awareness of different aspects of life locally, and in the wider world. Moral and social development are very good and children

very clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Safe and healthy lifestyles are promoted very well and children successfully practise what they learn about the benefits of healthy food and the value of physical exercise. Attendance is satisfactory and the school is working hard to improve this further; punctuality is good.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Children are taught well and the school's view that the quality of teaching is good is supported by inspection evidence. Teachers make lessons interesting, carefully planning activities that are matched to children's needs. This makes children want to learn as they know that they will experience success. Good subject knowledge means that teachers can ask appropriate questions that challenge all children's thinking. High expectations of work and of behaviour are evident and children respond very well, trying to do their best in all their activities. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other and are not afraid to ask and answer questions. Children are encouraged to evaluate how well they are doing and teachers are good at explaining what they are looking for when they mark written work. However, as yet, children are not always sure why their work is good and what they have to do to improve it further.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The school offers a good range of lessons and stimulating activities. Classrooms are bright and exciting, providing a good learning environment. Inspectors agree with the school's view that the curriculum is good. However, learning opportunities for children in the reception year are not as good as in the nursery.

The school has identified the need to raise the standards of the more able children and those who are gifted and talented, and is supplementing the curriculum with good activities to do this. Provision for children learning English an additional language is good. Children with special educational needs are provided for well; individual educational plans are of a good quality and are used well to help children reach specific and relevant targets.

In response to the parents' concern about opportunities for extra-curricular activities, the school extended the range to include French, art, ICT, football and line dancing clubs. These effectively enrich the curriculum and are attended regularly by the children.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Children are exceptionally well cared for and quite rightly the school judges the effectiveness of its work as outstanding. The trust children have in the adults in the school, and the advice and support they receive, are excellent. It is a place where every child matters. Care and support for children with learning difficulties and for those for whom English is an additional language are very good. Provision for children's emotional needs is also very good. Vulnerable children speak confidently about how proud the headteacher is of them and of their work, demonstrating how the school carefully guides and monitors their progress. The school frequently carries out health and safety checks and risk assessments are fully in place. Child protection procedures are regularly reviewed and children say that they feel very safe, secure and valued. All children flourish in this supportive learning environment.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Driven by the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, and the very good support of her deputy, this school has improved dramatically. On appointment, the headteacher analysed what had to be done, put into place very effective strategies to improve, and ensured that staff shared her firm commitment to high standards and her values of care and respect. Inspectors agree with the school's view that leadership and management are good. Subject leaders are supportive and knowledgeable; they are steadily improving their leadership and management skills. This school knows what to do to improve extremely well, which is reflected in the school improvement plan. This knowledge is shared and used by all staff, the outcome being evident in the good progress made by most children, and in their very strong sense of security and well-being. There are no variations in the ways children are treated or taught as they grow older and this has created a caring and harmonious school. All children have equal opportunities to take part in school life, and do.

Many very effective initiatives have been introduced to help the school improve and to evaluate how well it is doing. These systems are having a positive effect on the standards that learners attain, but procedures for analysing performance data and tracking children's progress have not yet had sufficient time to become fully embedded in the school's work. The school regularly seeks the views of stakeholders, and acts upon them. Parents think highly of the school's leadership.

The governors know the school well and meet their statutory duties. They make good use of their skills and expertise to support and challenge the school across the full range of its activities.

Grade: 2

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	2	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	3	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	NA
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	NA

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To the Children of Blyth Newsham First School

Warwick Street
Blyth
Northumberland
NE24 4NX

17 June 2005

Dear Children

What a wonderful time we had visiting your school. We can understand why you are so proud of it. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn.

What we liked most about your school:

- You have an outstanding headteacher. You trust your teachers a lot and there is always someone to go to if you are worried.
- Your teachers make learning interesting and give you work that helps you to get better and better. The standard of your work is improving.
- Your behaviour is very good, which means that you can all enjoy learning together and teachers do not waste time dealing with problems.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities and your school council has done a huge amount of good work to help improve the school.
- You take great pleasure in your work and always do your best. You all get on very well together and older children are very good at helping younger ones.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- We could see how much you enjoyed using the new whiteboards in your classrooms and how exciting it was when you used them to help you learn. Now that the new computer suite is almost finished we have asked your teachers to plan for you to use computers more to improve your ICT skills.
- We have asked your teachers to tell you what you should do next to make your learning even better. We have also asked them to check regularly that you are making the progress you should be doing.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do lots of interesting and exciting things and we have asked your teachers to see if they can find interesting and exciting things for you to do in the reception class too.

We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Furness
(Lead Inspector)