



## Inspection Report

**Better  
education  
and care**

**Unique Reference Number** 114247  
**LEA**  
**Inspection number** 279344  
**Inspection dates** 6 December 2005 to 7 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hustledown
<b>School category</b>	Community		South Moor
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Stanley, County Durham
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 232189
<b>Number on roll</b>	84	<b>Fax number</b>	01207 280367
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Allan

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

The school is smaller than average with the 84 pupils arranged in four mixed-age classes. Attainment on entry to the school is well below what is typical, and there are few higher attaining children. Close to half of its pupils come from non-Catholic families because of the school's good reputation in the community. Pupils are from a predominantly white British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Since the last inspection the school has achieved the Investors in People Award and is on the way to achieving the Healthy Schools Award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school that its effectiveness is good and it gives good value for money, although it undervalues some of its qualities. The quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum, and care and guidance for pupils are all good. They support good progress for all groups of learners, so that, although their starting points in English and mathematics are low when they join the Reception class, pupils reach average standards by Year 6. Some weaknesses in mathematical development have rightly been identified by the school for improvement this year. The quality of provision and standards in the Foundation Stage is good and improving. The arrangement for having Year 1 pupils included in this provision benefits the lower attaining pupils well. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though the inspector agrees with Year 6 pupils that they could carry more responsibilities in the school. Attendance is close to average and is reduced by the poor attendance of a few pupils. Leadership and management are good and so too is the contribution that governors make to the development of the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school is well placed to continue its improvement.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop strategies to improve pupils' problem-solving in mathematics.
- Improve the attendance of the few pupils whose learning is affected by their irregular attendance.
- Provide opportunities for Year 6 pupils to take on more responsibility in the school community to develop their citizenship skills even further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are average and this represents good achievement. Children start school with attainments that are well below what is typical for their age. By Year 6 they reach standards that are close to the national average for 11-year-olds. At the end of Reception, children have made good progress but many do not reach the nationally set early learning goals, especially in language and mathematical development. Pupils continue to make good progress, and by Year 2 pupils achieve well and exceed the average in reading, writing and mathematics in national tests. By Year 6, the majority of pupils reach the level expected for their age, though the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level is below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' performance in mathematics is less good than it is in the other subjects. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same good progress as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect is good. Children's behaviour is outstanding, and they all show a strong interest and enthusiasm for their learning in and out of the classroom. They make healthy choices in their food, drink water regularly throughout the day and enjoy taking advantage of the varied opportunities for energetic exercise that the school offers. They contribute well to the community. They are generous fundraisers and love to organise themselves for giving, either through the Shoe Box scheme, the Children in Need initiative or the many school-based activities that raise money for those in need across the world. They demonstrate very caring attitudes to one another, and there is no bullying or any other form of harassment. This caring is especially notable in the behaviour of older pupils who instinctively support and look after younger pupils. A few think that more planned opportunities to do this would be beneficial and the inspector agrees. Attendance is close to average. Most pupils come to school regularly and on time, but a few pupils do not attend regularly. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the qualities that are developed are reflected in their caring attitudes, knowledge of other faiths and clear sense of right and wrong behaviour.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Some very good teaching was seen in several classes, and teaching and learning are good overall. All teachers make effective use of good assessment information to plan work to match the needs of different learners. The good planning ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress and enjoy their learning because they always meet with success. The targets set to help pupils improve work well both in raising standards and in giving pupils a better understanding of their learning. Teachers' use of a good range of methods to interest and involve pupils in their learning is particularly beneficial to pupils who do not learn well by listening for long periods. Good quality teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics lessons prepares pupils well for later life, though the teaching of mathematics does not emphasise practical methods of solving problems enough to increase pupils' understanding. Well planned teaching in science and in personal, social and health education gives pupils a good base from which to develop healthy lifestyles and recognise the need to be alert to each other's feelings. Teachers and support assistants work very closely to plan pupils' learning so that all pupils are well supported in class, and become confident, independent learners from an early age. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by classroom assistants so that they reach the targets that are set for them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is well tailored to the interests of pupils and is well planned to meet the needs of the different learners in the school. As a result all pupils are well prepared for their future in education and work. The school's provision for enriching pupils' learning through visits, visitors and out-of-school clubs is outstanding. Teachers and support staff give of their time unstintingly to ensure that pupils' interests and talents are developed in a very wide range of out of school clubs. These are very well supported by pupils of all ages. Visits and visitors broaden pupils' knowledge of the world while showing them there are many different ways to learn. Very high quality display enhances pupils' learning across the school. Pupils were often seen to pause to consider the many interesting areas such as the 'jungle' or the artefacts in the Victorian school display. The curriculum is well planned so that pupils have good opportunities to learn how to stay safe and healthy.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care guidance and support are good. Parents are delighted with the quality of care the school provides for their children. Two parents commented that their children had 'settled and become very happy', after transferring to the school during the last year. The school's very thorough and effective procedures ensure pupils are safe, secure and protected, and have access to good support if they need it. The school makes very good links with parents, who are regularly consulted upon issues relating to their children's learning. All children are well known to their teachers and place great trust in them. They say, 'We know that teachers will listen and solve the problem.' Children who are at risk or are vulnerable are very well cared for and supported to make the same progress as their peers. Despite the school's hard work and good range of incentives to get pupils to school regularly, a few pupils attend irregularly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's dedication to providing high levels of care for the whole school community is fully realised. She sets a clear direction for raising standards alongside the high quality of care, which together ensure that all children are supported to learn. For example, this term new class arrangements for teaching mathematics have been tried, which are about to be evaluated to see what their impact has been. The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and encourages them to extend their professional skills continually to improve the quality of provision for pupils. Effective school evaluation and very good teamwork enable this small school to run smoothly and develop well because staff share ideas and willingly take on additional responsibilities, which they discharge effectively. The school takes very good account of the views of parents and has made several improvements in the last year in response to these. Governors are knowledgeable

about the school and give good support for its continued development. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, and given the strengths in current staffing the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Hustledown  
South Moor  
Stanley  
County Durham  
DH9 6PH

8 December 2005

Dear Children

Thank you all very much for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were all kind, friendly and helped me so much to find out many things about your school.

Here are some of the things I liked about your school:

your very good behaviour at all times which helps everyone to learn so well

the way you look after each all through the day and take care that no one feels hurt or lonely that Year 6 pupils would like to do more to look after the school and make it better. I agree they should, because they are very clever at helping already

your hard work which is helping all of you to get better at so many different things

the way you join in so many activities and enjoy your time in school. How fit and healthy you are because you eat and drink sensibly and take plenty of exercise

how much your headteacher and teachers care for you and work hard to make your learning interesting

how your parents are so pleased that you go to such a lovely, caring school and are happy and safe there.

To make things even better I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

help you learn how to solve problems in mathematics by sometimes playing games and having real problems to tackle

help your teachers know more about how well you are doing and how you learn best

help some of you come to school more often so you don't miss the important and lovely things that happen there

find ways of giving Year 6 pupils more responsibility in the school.

Finally, thank you all for the lovely card you made for me. It made me feel very happy to get so many good wishes and will help me remember my time in your school.

Best wishes,

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector