



Tweedmouth Prior Park First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122187
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281182
Inspection dates 1 November 2005 to 2 November 2005
Reporting inspector Arthur Allison

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | First | School address | Dean Drive |
| School category | Community | | Tweedmouth |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 9 | | Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01289 306667 |
| Number on roll | 180 | Fax number | 01289 309260 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Karen Thorburn |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 November 2000 | Headteacher | P Wilson |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school for children aged 3 – 9. The school serves a large council estate with high levels of deprivation. Children's overall attainment on entry to school varies but is generally below average with social and language skills well below average. The school has an above average percentage of children eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average and rising. The percentage of children with statements of special educational need is well above average. Very few children come from minority ethnic groups. No children are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement matches the school's own accurate assessment of its effectiveness in all respects. The key areas for improvement identified by the school match the findings of the inspection. The school is improving and parents have confidence in it. All children make good progress because teaching is consistently good. Standards vary from average to below average from year to year because attainment on entry also varies, but social and language skills are well below average. The headteacher has high expectations of children and staff. She has a clear understanding of how well children are achieving and what needs to be done to raise standards further. This includes a more rigorous check on the quality of teaching. All staff are supportive of the headteacher and share her aims. The children's good personal and social skills are a strength of the school; they enjoy school and want to learn. The school works well with other agencies to support the achievement and well-being of all children. Children with learning difficulties are identified early and receive good help and support. The school has eliminated the previously identified shortcomings in the Foundation Stage and in handwriting, and has good plans to extend children's vocabulary in order to raise standards in writing. The Foundation Stage is now good; teaching is consistently good and children settle quickly into school and make good progress. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well, particularly in following up the impact of spending decisions. The school gives good value for money and has the capacity to make the necessary further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend children's vocabulary in order to raise standards in writing.
- Check the quality of teaching more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children generally achieve well and reach average overall standards. When children start school their overall attainment is generally below average. In some years it is well below average, with social and language skills always being the weaker elements. Children enjoy school and make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in social and language skills. The national test results at the end of Year 2 and results of optional tests at the end of Year 4 show that children continue to make good progress as they move up the school, though overall standards vary from year to year. The national test results in 2005 were lower than in 2004 because of a higher proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The standards of children in the current Year 4 are average. The school sets challenging targets for its Year 4 children, which are not always met, but children usually do better than projected on the basis of their Year 2 test results. Targets set for individual children ensure that they all know what they have to do to improve. Children's speaking and listening skills, particularly the breadth of their vocabulary, are not strong enough to form a good base from which

to raise achievement in writing. Staff are working on this and some good work was seen, for example, in a literacy lesson in a Year 2 class. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because they are identified early and given considerable help. Children who are above average on entry to school also make good progress and reach levels higher than those expected by the time they leave.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children's personal development and well-being are good. In the Foundation Stage, the children gain the personal and social skills necessary for successful learning. Older children have positive attitudes; they say they enjoy school because they have to work hard. The children choose to eat healthy food in school and are keen to exercise through play and sports. They are aware of the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs and know how to stay safe. The oldest children know about growing up and relationships.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

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The quality of teaching and learning is good. Consistently good teaching throughout the school enables children to make good progress from year to year. The school is working to further improve learning by the adoption of the national strategy of Assessment for Learning. In the Foundation Stage, teaching has improved and is now good. Lessons promote personal development well through all areas of learning. As a result, children quickly learn to concentrate and sit quietly and gain in confidence; for example, to talk about themselves.

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In Years 1-4, effective planning and assessment ensure that work is pitched at the right level for children of all abilities. Consequently, different groups of children make similarly good progress, including children in the nurture class. Children who have learning difficulties benefit considerably from extra help provided by well-briefed teaching assistants, for example when enabling children to succeed in reading temperatures from a thermometer scale in a Year 4 mathematics lesson. The most able children are challenged by their work and say that learning is fun.

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Teachers ensure that children understand what they are learning and set realistic targets for groups and individuals. Skilful questioning and marking that tells children what they need to do to improve help to ensure that all are motivated to do well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum meets the needs of all children, including those in the Foundation Stage, and fulfils statutory requirements. Children like the work they do in school, especially sports and mathematics. They also look forward to the wide range of after-school clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum. Economic well-being is given suitable emphasis. Children benefit from a range of outings and visitors to school to give them first-hand experiences which increase their enjoyment and learning. A philosophical slant to the children's personal, social and health education is a key element of the curriculum which helps them to develop skills in thinking and debate and to consider sophisticated issues, such as "Is it ever right to take drugs?". Many opportunities to work in the local community and a programme aimed at developing citizenship help prepare children for life after school and enable them to make a valuable contribution.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for and receive good support and guidance. They say that they feel safe in school. This safe environment is created through the diligence of staff and governors who ensure that all health and safety and child protection procedures are in place and understood. Detailed risk assessments demonstrate a strong commitment to the safety of all. Comprehensive records enable teachers to track children's progress, identify those who need help and set realistic targets for further work. They also provide valuable information for parents who feel that the school keeps them well-informed about their children's progress. Relationships that are based on mutual respect pave the way for teachers to provide informal support and guidance for children and parents. This is most noticeable in the confidence with which children in Year 4 are already talking about the move to the next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides thoughtful leadership, fully supported by the senior management team and all other staff, so that all work together to raise standards. A notable feature is the good provision of professional training for teachers and teaching assistants.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. In the Foundation Stage, all the shortcomings identified have been eliminated. For example, improved leadership and management have led to consistently good teaching and assessment that informs planning. The outdoor education opportunities for both Reception and Nursery classes are good. Consequently all children make good progress. The school has adopted a new handwriting scheme in all classes so that standards of handwriting have risen and are now satisfactory. The school shows that it has the capacity to make

further improvements. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in all aspects of its work' it knows what it is doing well and what needs to be done to improve. This is shown by the school's two main priorities. Firstly, the school intends to continue to extend children's vocabulary to raise standards in writing. Secondly, the school is extending its system of checking on teaching and learning, closely linked to the implementation of the national strategy of Assessment for Learning.

The governing body manages the school's finances well. The governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. Spending decisions are followed up, for example to see how the provision of interactive whiteboards in all classrooms has improved the quality of teaching and learning.

Grade: 2

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 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

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|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ 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

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | 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

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

¹ 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

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 |

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| 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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3 November, 2005

Dear children

Following our visit to your school this week we would like to thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons.

We can see why you are proud of your school because:

your teachers and other adults in the school work hard to help you to do your best and to be safe and looked after in school;

you enjoy learning and behave well;

you listen carefully to what others in your classes say and are very willing and proud to take on responsibilities;

you enjoy taking part in a number of extra activities other than lessons;

you have a headteacher who is clear about what the school should do to help you to do your very best and the other teachers and adults in the school fully support her in this.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to make it better. The school should:

Continue to help you to extend your vocabulary in order to do better in writing

Widen the way the school checks on teaching

Thank you again for making us feel welcome. Keep trying to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison and Mrs Manning-Lawson

The Inspection Team

Annex B