



# Linton First School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122199  
**LEA** Northumberland  
**Inspection number** 281188  
**Inspection dates** 13 July 2006 to 13 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Delia Hiscock

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Linton
<b>School category</b>	Community		Morpeth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9		Northumberland, NE61 5SG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 860361
<b>Number on roll</b>	14	<b>Fax number</b>	01670 860361
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr George Jackson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Katherine Urwin

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 13 July 2006 - 13 July 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281188
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This tiny school is situated in Linton, a former colliery village near Morpeth. It serves an isolated rural population. School numbers have declined over a long period of time. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is high, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils are of White British heritage. Attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age. Currently, the school is subject to consultation as to a possible combination with another local school. Comparisons with standards nationally are unreliable because of the very small cohorts of pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education for the tiny number of pupils and families it serves. It evaluates its work well. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. She is the sole full-time teacher and ensures that all the staff know each pupil very well and provide very good care and support for their pastoral and academic needs. Assessment systems are used well and shared approaches mean that pupils achieve consistently well to meet and sometimes exceed challenging targets set for them. Pupils achieve really well in reading and writing, making very positive progress from low stages of development. Their progress in mathematics and science is good. Pupils' personal development, their well-being, and the care, guidance and support they receive, are outstanding.

The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good so children have an effective start to their school life. They thrive in the family groups organised into two classes of mixed ages. They often soak up the challenge of ideas set for older pupils. Teaching and learning are good and feature some innovative approaches. The curriculum is good and matches pupils' needs well, fosters valuable community links and features an exceptionally good range of enrichment activities. These open up the world beyond school and foster a good range of skills. Improvement in provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good but it is not used enough to support learning in other subjects. Despite the challenge of declining numbers, leadership provides good capacity to improve. The school recognises, and the inspector agrees, that older pupils need the challenge of working with other pupils of their age in order to stretch them academically. Parents and carers are very enthusiastic about their school and with their children play an important role in decision-making in their school. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the collaborative work with other schools to raise standards of pupils in Years 3 and 4 through the challenge of working with a larger group of pupils.
- Develop further pupils' use of computers in other subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good, including that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children in their Reception year get off to a successful start in a class with Key Stage 1 pupils. They make good progress from a well below average stage of development on entry, particularly in their language and communication skills. Often, those who are more mature in their development attain the level expected in all areas of learning by the start of Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing, with pupils writing interesting and lengthy stories and accounts. They continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 because there is very supportive teaching that caters for individual learning needs within the Key Stage 2

class. Consequently, achievement continues to be positive in reading and writing and satisfactory in mathematics. The school collaborates with other schools so that older pupils who are more able, progress at a quicker rate than they used to do. However, there is room for further improvement in this collaborative provision, particularly in mathematics. By the time they are ready to move to Year 5 and their next stage of education, pupils attain standards that are broadly those expected for pupils this age.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school and that they 'all get on together'. They see their school as an important part of their life and so attendance is good. They particularly like the organised games and equipment at playtime and lunchtime where they learn to make choices about what they would like to do. Throughout the school, relationships are nurtured very well and pupils work very amicably together in their two 'family' classes. They behave really well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Older pupils tend to look after younger ones around the school, take on shared responsibilities, and everyone is encouraged to take part in the rich variety of events such as the school's 80th birthday and whole-school visits. Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy, and that exercise is good for you. They love the shared garden they have made and are rightly very proud of their work. Their views and ideas are very much heeded and together they have helped to make many changes to improve their school. In many of these enterprises, clubs and community events, they gain workplace skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils develop the skills and habits for learning through the teachers' good knowledge, teamwork and a thorough understanding of pupils' individual needs. Teaching places a strong emphasis on the basic skills for speaking, reading, writing and numeracy. This helps pupils to build on that already learned, and with computerised teaching boards used well to model and demonstrate ideas, pupils find learning fun. Younger pupils are provided with additional challenge by working alongside older pupils in their mixed-age lessons and often revisit ideas and skills. This pays dividend in their writing, because some aspire to the models provided by older and higher attaining pupils.

Pupils feel that their contributions are valued and their confidence to speak grows, including those who find this difficult or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessment is used well to set work and pupils have a ready grasp of what they are learning. However, whilst there is sufficient challenge set in literacy for higher attaining pupils, pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not have regular opportunities to gain from

discussion with other pupils who are working at their level of attainment; a factor that hinders the growth of their independence. Sometimes, in mathematics, they complete activities that do not stretch them enough to move them on quickly.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, including that provided for children in Reception. The range of enrichment activities is outstanding. Activities are well matched to the needs of most pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides lots of opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills and is starting to develop problem-solving in mathematics within the network of local schools. New hardware now supports the progression of skills in ICT, but is not used much across other subjects. The school builds in some exciting activities that blend learning across many subjects. A Hindu dance event and a pupils' lunch in a large, city school are just two of these. In many ways, this opens up ideas to pupils and encourages them to take a lead in discussion and to write at length; a strength of the curriculum. These vibrant activities contribute well to the pupils' enjoyment, confidence and self-esteem.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of the care, guidance and support pupils receive is outstanding. The attention and help pupils receive is central to their well-being and enjoyment of school. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whose needs are quickly identified. When asked, pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school and that they know who to turn to if they need help. Child protection procedures and risk assessment are fully in place and known by staff. There are effective links with outside agencies when needed. Parents express very positive views about the school. They have very good relationships with the teachers and work closely with them to benefit their child's education. Arrangements for settling children on entry into school and for transfer to the middle school are very effective and make the transition journey stress free. Teachers know pupils' needs really well and help them to strive by providing very clear personal guidance that helps pupils to improve on their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The school's evaluation of itself is accurate. The leadership of the headteacher is a strength of the school. She provides a clear direction and a commitment to provide a curriculum closely matched to pupils' needs, with lots of rich activities to help them to achieve and enjoy their education. Outstanding personal development and well-being and a really good climate for learning have been created. Consequently, pupils want to do well. Staff, governors, parents and pupils contribute to the school's effective plans for improvement. Governance is strong. Governors share the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning with

staff. This in turn informs the school's performance management and the recruitment of staff. These factors have helped to maintain the school's good quality of teaching and outstanding level of care, guidance and support for pupils during a time fraught with the possibility of change ahead. 'It's like being in a family' a pupil noted. Very good links with the community contribute to the confidence that parents and carers have in their school and the high regard for it. They have fought to keep it open in recent years. There is good improvement in ICT but full use of its potential for learning is yet to be harnessed across the curriculum. Leadership in the Foundation Stage is equally good. Staff work very closely together, sharing the leadership of subjects well. They too help to place the school in a good position to move forward.

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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>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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>	1	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	1	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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The Pupils

Linton First School

Linton

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13 July 2006

Dear Pupils

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. I was impressed by the kindness and politeness you showed me. This letter is to tell you what I think about your school. Perhaps you might like to read it together and talk about what you can do to make your school even better.

I think that your school is a good one. I really liked the way that you all get on so well together. I think that you work hard in lessons and behave so thoughtfully towards each other. I really liked the way that you all discuss things together in lessons. I enjoyed reading your writing. It's super. Well done!

I agree with you that teachers work hard to make lessons just right for you. I think that this is why you learn well. I think it would be super if you could use computers in lots of subjects. This could make learning even better. I also think that those of you in Years 3 and 4 would learn lots from sharing some lessons with pupils from another local school. This could be great fun too.

I can see also that you have learned how to keep safe and healthy, and to care about others. Keep up your good work! I wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Delia Hiscock

School Inspector