



Netherton Northside First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122211
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281193
Inspection dates 16 February 2006 to 16 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	First	School address	Netherton
School category	Community		Rothbury
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		Morpeth, Northumberland
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01669 630234
Number on roll	24	Fax number	01669 630234
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Carolyn Graham
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2000	Headteacher	Hilda Blythe

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 9	16 February 2006 - 16 February 2006	281193

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Netherton Northside First School is a rural school situated in Netherton, Northumberland. Most children who attend live in small villages or on farms and are socially advantaged. None is entitled to free school meals. All speak English at home. Attainment overall as children start school is about average. Over a quarter of those attending have learning difficulties. The headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

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 rightly judges itself to be a good school. It gives good value for money. Parents' confidence in it is justified. The school has a family atmosphere where all children are valued and well known to staff. It takes good care of the children and offers a good level of support, particularly to those who have learning difficulties. Children's personal development is good; they are confident and well behaved. Good teaching helps them to achieve well and reach high standards by the end of Year 2. They continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and meet the targets set for them. Children enjoy their lessons and are proud of their work, although they do not show enough independence, nor are they sure about what they need to learn next. The curriculum is satisfactory but children have too few opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. Children begin nursery with attainment levels that are typical for their age. Close interaction helps them settle well and enjoy school. They make good progress and exceed the standards expected nationally. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure its children have the right learning opportunities. The headteacher is successfully leading a committed team of staff and governors. However subject leadership is underdeveloped. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and maintained standards at an above average level. It is well placed to move forward.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of the subject leader to improve the overall quality of the curriculum.
- Develop children's independence and make them more responsible for their own learning.
- Improve the way ICT is planned for use in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and better than the school judges it to be. Children enter the nursery with a range of experiences but overall their ability is average. Direct involvement and good teaching help them make good progress. By the end of the reception class, children reach standards that are above national expectations. Teachers challenge children well so they continue to make good progress. By the end of Year 2 achievement is outstanding. In mathematics all reach an above average standard and more than half reach the higher Level 3. In reading, all achieve an above average standard and in writing all reach the expected level of attainment. Children in Years 3 and 4 also achieve well and the majority are likely to reach the challenging targets predicted for them based on their Key Stage 1 test results. The school has recently begun to develop a tracking system to check individual progress and set challenging targets. Standards in ICT are below expectation and a very detailed action plan is being

enacted to raise them. Standards in music are well above expectation owing to staff expertise. Because they receive excellent support and individual education plans are sharply focused, children with learning difficulties make exceptional progress to achieve above average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Children know right and wrong, have a positive attitude and behave well. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. Assemblies encourage children to celebrate success by reflecting on topical issues such as the Winter Olympics. Cultural development is strong. Children sing local folk songs and the school has a ceilidh band. Children's self esteem is good. They talk confidently with visitors and are friendly and polite. Some volunteer to sing solo in assembly. Children know their views are valued and their ideas listened to. The school council has been instrumental in having playtime buddies and ensuring good hygiene signs are displayed in school. However, only the oldest children are council members. Children know the importance of eating good food and all have milk and a fruit snack each day. They know physical activity keeps people fit and healthy. Children's basic skills are very good and they work well together, although there are some missed opportunities to ensure they develop responsibility in and around school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers explain clearly and demonstrate well so children know how to tackle new work confidently. Tasks have a clear purpose and children learn well because work accurately matches their abilities. Teachers and assistants plan well together, therefore children have plenty of individual and small group attention and this accelerates their learning. There are not enough opportunities for children to use computers and therefore developing ideas across different subjects is limited at times. Teachers know children well, assess them regularly and set targets, although there is some inconsistency in the way these are presented to individual children. For this reason, some are not clear about how they can improve their work and take responsibility for their own learning. In the Foundation Stage the warm relationships, good role modelling together with practical activities, ensure that children learn well and enjoy activities in school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, although the school judged it to be good. The school uses national guidance to plan lessons and to ensure the full range of learning needs

is met. Basic literacy and mathematical skills are taught well, although ICT is not exploited sufficiently. There is new technological equipment in school but internet access is inconsistent. This affects research in some subjects. Indoor provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children have plenty of opportunities for chosen and directed activities. The outside curriculum is temporarily on hold pending the completion of the new nursery unit. The school places good emphasis on health and safety, and children have made safety posters while the builders are working in the school. There is some enrichment in the curriculum. All learn to play a musical instrument. Planned visits to cities and places of interest, including historical sites and places of worship make children aware of the wider world. The school is planning to begin after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all children. Staff know children so well that the ethos is similar to that of an extended family. Staff are fully committed to children's welfare and to helping them develop healthy lifestyles. Child protection procedures are well established and understood by all staff. Risk assessments, which involve the children, demonstrate a strong commitment to children's safety. Children say they feel safe in school because they have trusting relationships with all adults. The support given to children who have learning difficulties is excellent. There are regular links with parents and outside agencies to ensure learning programmes match their individual needs. Vulnerable children are cared for very sensitively. Children settle quickly into the nursery because staff visit them at home first. The monitoring of children's work and tracking of their achievement are established in school so children are well challenged.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is having an immediate and positive impact on the school. Within a very short period of time, through encouragement and hard work, she has all staff working together as a team and all have a common sense of purpose. She has broadened the curriculum, improved assessment systems and developed planning. There is a strong commitment to maintaining the high standards and good levels of care because the entire staff are very clear about the school's future direction. During the last few years, staff have had few opportunities for professional development and previous headteachers have had full responsibility for all subjects. The school realises that this needs to change. The role of the subject leaders needs to improve so all become skilled at observing and supporting other teachers and are better placed to play a fuller part in developing the school's curriculum. The school's self-evaluation and the subsequent improvement plan were devised with the support of staff, governors and parents. The plan focuses clearly on relevant actions to raise standards even further in reading and writing and to promote developments in ICT. Governors support and evaluate the work of the school and play a full and active role in its development. The school therefore has good capacity to improve.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	1	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	2	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	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	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?	3	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	3	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

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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Mrs Hilda Blyth

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16 February 2006

Dear Children

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. It will look absolutely superb when the builders have finished their work. I really loved talking with you about the way the School Council works. I particularly liked the celebration assembly. I know everyone loves music in school and it was wonderful to hear one of you playing the accordion and three singing solo pieces. I am sorry I missed the ceilidh band!

I know you are well cared for in school because your teachers know each and every one of you very well. It was a delight to see how hard you work in lessons and how well you listen to your teachers. The work in your books is beautifully set out. Teachers make you work very hard with your mathematics and most of you are doing outstanding work here. You are also doing well in your reading and writing.

I have found out that teachers give you tests from time to time and I have asked them to make sure you understand what you need to learn next to become even better. So make sure you try hard to reach your targets and think about ways you can improve your work. It is important that you try to do things for yourselves and not always depend on adults in the school. Teachers are going to look at the way subjects are taught in order to find and share exciting new ideas. They are also going to make sure you can use computers more to help you find out about different ideas. So you should then try to include computer work in all subjects.

I was very pleased to find out that you have Playtime Buddies to look after you and to discover that you in turn have collected money for children who have nothing at all. I know you give gifts to the elderly in the village. These are very kind things to do.

I hope you continue to work hard and do well at Netherton Northside First School.

With very best wishes

Gianna Ulyatt
Lead inspector