



Mowbray First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122243
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281202
Inspection dates 14 March 2006 to 15 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	First	School address	Stakeford Lane
School category	Community		Guide Post
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		Choppington, Northumberland
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01670 823198
Number on roll	270	Fax number	01670 531329
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Moody
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2004	Headteacher	Mrs Joan Riley

Age group 3 to 9	Inspection dates 14 March 2006 - 15 March 2006	Inspection number 281202
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly larger than average first school. Economically and socially, the area suffers from slight disadvantage and children's attainment on entry is below average. There are very few minority ethnic pupils and about average numbers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One hundred and thirteen children are in the Foundation Stage, most of them are taught in the attached unit. The population of the area is growing and numbers on roll are rising. This has resulted in a small group of Reception age children being taught in a mixed age class with Year 1 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's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies. It is now a good school giving good value for money; this judgement accords with the school's own view of itself. It has improved significantly in recent years and has a good capacity to keep improving. Parents feel their children are enjoying school and making good progress. Pupils know they attend a good school. They are happy and well cared for. Throughout the school, standards are above average and rising. This has been brought about through good leadership, management and governance. Outstanding improvement in the Foundation Stage has taken it from being a serious weakness to a strength of the school. Nursery children get off to a good start because staff provide a well balanced programme which matches their needs. Good progress continues through Reception in all areas of learning and children join Year 1 at the expected level having also made good progress in their personal development. The curriculum for the small group of Reception children taught in the mixed age class is not as well matched to their learning and developmental needs as it is in the Foundation Stage unit but, by the end of Year 2, good teaching and learning results in pupils exceeding expectations, even though teachers occasionally miss opportunities to help them improve their writing skills. There is no fall-off in Years 3 and 4 and pupils attain above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Personal development is good and pupils are outstandingly well prepared for their future well-being.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Adjust the curriculum in the mixed age class to ensure that reception children in that class have equally appropriate opportunities to those in the Foundation Stage unit.
- Raise standards by promoting a stronger culture of writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils say they work hard. Parents are happy with their children's progress. Expectations are high and pupils enjoy a good degree of success in meeting their targets. Standards have been rising for the last five years. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment. For the last two years, Year 2 pupils have exceeded the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics, more pupils attain or surpass each level than is the case nationally. The only target the school did not meet last year was for the writing of higher attaining pupils. This was only narrowly missed but serves to illustrate the point that teachers are not always making sufficient demands on pupils to overcome an occasional reluctance to put pen to paper. Good teaching and learning ensure that progress

continues in Years 3 and 4 and all targets are met or exceeded by the time they leave. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented make the same progress as other pupils. Girls achieve slightly better than boys, especially in reading. The school has responded well to this by buying more books to reflect the interests of boys to encourage them to read more.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

These are good. Pupils look forward to coming to school. Attendance has been improving for the last three years and now matches the national average. Behaviour is good and most pupils act safely and sensibly. Pupils have high moral standards and are indignant if individuals misbehave. Attitudes are good, although pupils occasionally show a reluctance to write. Foundation Stage children quickly settle to routines and learn to share sensibly. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Success is celebrated and pupils frequently reflect on the lives of others, especially those from other countries, such as the children in a Ugandan School with which Mowbray has close links. The school council and 'Mowbray Mates' give pupils excellent opportunities to demonstrate their growing sense of social responsibility, especially towards younger pupils. Pupils are eager to join these groups, which make an excellent contribution to the development of a strong school community. The way the school combines good academic progress and the promotion of independence and responsibility stands pupils in excellent stead for future economic and social well-being. Pupils take a lot of exercise and show good awareness of healthy habits.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Work is carefully planned and varied well to meet individual needs. Mixed age classes are well managed. Lessons in the Foundation Stage Unit include a wide range of whole class, small group and individual activities which suit children's learning styles well. Teachers are confident. They maintain good behaviour by making learning interesting and keeping pupils involved. Occasionally, teachers dwell over-long on discussion with pupils. The pupils like this; they answer questions keenly and sensibly and clearly demonstrate their understanding. It is when they are asked to express themselves in writing that reluctance is occasionally encountered. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to take notes and to develop a stronger interest in writing. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support to pupils and teachers, often working with small groups of pupils working at a different level to the rest of the class. Teachers keep a good check on pupils' progress and often use examples of pupils' work to show the class what hard working pupils have achieved. This serves to encourage learners and help uncertain ones.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and meets all requirements. A wide range of visits, visitors and clubs helps make learning memorable. There is a good focus on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The good programme of personal, social, health, and citizenship education greatly aids the personal development of pupils. Work is sensitively adapted to allow pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or those who are gifted or talented, to make good progress. The good indoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage allows all children to be involved in key activities whilst also having opportunities for free choice. The outdoor learning area is due for development and is currently satisfactory. Reception pupils in the mixed age class are being somewhat rushed into a Key Stage 1 curriculum and facilities in this class are not as well suited to the learning needs of these children as they are in the Foundation Stage unit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support are extended to all pupils. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage are appreciative of the guidance they receive about helping their children to learn letter sounds and recognise numbers. Safety checks are rigorous and pupils are well protected. Learning difficulties are quickly and accurately assessed and good support is given. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and helped to fulfil their potential. Parents are regularly consulted. They are given good information about their children's progress and how they can contribute. Training for family learning through emotional health and well-being is being developed through a good link with the school nurse and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. The school council and 'Mowbray Mates' are outstanding in their work to promote safety and welfare around the school. The marking of pupils' work is good but comments about how work could be improved occasionally serve more as a reminder to teachers than informing and encouraging pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership, management and governance have brought about many changes for the better in recent years. They have contributed greatly to the raising of standards and the school's increasingly good reputation in the community. The headteacher and her deputy form a good team. Their capacity to keep making improvements is greatly helped by a good system of monitoring and evaluation which clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses and takes good account of the views of parents and pupils. The subject leader role is developing well and there are good improvement plans for each subject. Teachers' planning files are regularly checked and helpful comments made about how they could be improved. Teaching is frequently observed but points for development are occasionally not made clear. Pupils with learning and physical difficulties are fully

included in all activities but reception children in the mixed age class are not getting as good a deal as those in the unit. Financial planning and school administration are good and contribute greatly to the smooth, efficient running of the school. Governors have been a huge support. They have played an invaluable role in appointing good new staff, especially for the Foundation Stage, and guiding extensive redevelopment of the accommodation.

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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>	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	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	1	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

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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The Children

Mowbray First School

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NE62 5HQ

16 March 2006

Dear Children

It was a real pleasure to visit your school. It was heartening to see you brimming with enthusiasm and to hear you saying nice things about your school.

We liked what we saw. Those of you in the Foundation Stage unit are getting off to a really good start. The rest of you are also doing well, your teachers are good and you are making good progress. We didn't see any naughtiness at all. That's good. Most of the time you work hard, but some of you would rather talk about things than write about them. Lessons seem fun and it's good to see you meet lots of visitors. Those of you on the school council are doing a great job. It's good for pupils to give staff hints about how you think the school could be improved. Well done also you 'Mowbray Mates'. How good it is to see what a force for good you are and the help you give to younger children. A lot of the success of the school is down to you and your good headteacher. She's rightly proud of you and the staff.

The school is very popular which means that many children want to come so a few of the reception age children have had to be moved into the Year 1 class. They are doing well there but we've asked the school to make sure that you're not missing any reception class work.

Good luck for the future.

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector