



Heddon-on-the-Wall, St Andrew's Church of England First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122275
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281213
Inspection dates 23 March 2006 to 24 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	First	School address	Trajan Walk
School category	Voluntary controlled		Heddon-on-the-Wall
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE15 0BJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01661 853350
Number on roll	146	Fax number	01661 854753
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Karen Beck
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Susan Ellis

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 9	23 March 2006 - 24 March 2006	281213

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized first school serving a village and surrounding area where living standards are above average. Virtually all pupils are from white British families, with about a fifth from army families based locally. The movement within the pupil population is close to the national average. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that it provides a satisfactory education. The school is a happy place where pupils feel safe and work hard. Their progress through the school is satisfactory, and standards by Year 4 are broadly average, except in writing, which is below average. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. The provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) is satisfactory and children achieve their expected goals. Teaching is often good, especially in Year 2, but is satisfactory overall. Teachers engage pupils well but do not consistently set challenging enough work.

Parents appreciate that the school takes good care of their children, and promotes self-reliance and a healthy lifestyle. As a result, pupils enjoy school and become responsible. They benefit from many exciting activities outside lessons, although the day-to-day curriculum is not so varied or imaginative. The school has recently established exemplary systems to advise pupils about their progress, and these are beginning to have a positive impact on achievement, which is satisfactory at present.

The firm and enlightened leadership of the headteacher has given the school a renewed sense of purpose. Senior staff have an increasingly influential role in the school but are not yet rigorous enough in developing their subjects. The school knows itself well and has established good priorities for improvement. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. However, the recent good improvement in its provision means that the school is now in a good position to develop further. It gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in writing, by maintaining higher expectations of pupils and by matching work more closely to their abilities.
- Enrich pupils' learning by developing a more exciting and diverse curriculum.
- Ensure that subject leaders are more rigorous in devising and carrying out their plans for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. When children start school, their skills and abilities are usually close to average, although slightly below in language. Occasionally, attainment on entry is below average. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes and usually reach their expected goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils also make satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. This results in standards that are broadly average in reading and mathematics by the end of both Year 2 and Year 4. The quality of writing is below average at present, mainly because pupils do

not have good enough expression and do not always structure their ideas coherently. Other aspects, such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting, are all sound.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as measured against their individual targets. These pupils benefit from good, close support from all adults, and particularly teaching assistants, who explain new learning methodically and sensitively. Other pupils, including more able pupils, do not make equally good progress because teachers do not always expect enough from them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop well as individuals. Through the strong Christian ethos that pervades the school, they learn to be fair and respectful in their attitudes and feelings towards others. Relationships with adults and each other are good. Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and contribute positively to the school and wider community in many ways by. For example, they serve on the school council, act as buddies for younger pupils or lead fund-raising activities. Their cultural development is satisfactory but not better, because they have a limited awareness of life in a multi-cultural society.

Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn, which helps to explain why attendance is above average. Mostly, they behave well, but they occasionally, become restless and misbehave when the pace of the lesson flags or when the work is not challenging. This is particularly true of boys. Pupils know about the need to keep themselves safe and adopt a healthy lifestyle; many take advantage of the opportunities provided for healthy eating and physical exercise. Their capacity for teamwork and readiness to accept responsibility help to prepare the pupils for adult life and work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, it is often good, and is especially effective in Year 2. Teachers structure lessons carefully to create a good blend of direct teaching and independent learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage. They present work well and brief support staff thoughtfully, so pupils understand clearly what they need to learn and receive helpful advice. The marking of pupils' work is impressive because it praises adeptly and constantly sets clear targets for improvement. Despite this strong practice, assessment is satisfactory because teachers do not use it with consistent rigour to plan work that meets pupils' different needs.

Teachers rightly focus on key skills. They strive to provide good opportunities in lessons for speaking and writing, for example. They are increasingly enabling pupils to think for themselves in activities, such as problem-solving. However, not all teachers expect enough from their pupils. The more able pupils, for instance, do not have enough scope to work at their own pace. By contrast, teachers provide well for pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils, and the atmosphere

in classrooms is positive. Sometimes, though, the pace of lessons slackens and this restricts pupils' learning and causes them to lose concentration.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum throughout the school is satisfactory and meets external requirements. This differs from the school's view that it is good. There are strengths, such as a good focus on pupils' personal, social and health education, and effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils understandably speak highly of the school's extra activities. After-school clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy visits to theatres, art galleries and museums, which enhance their work in lessons. Theme weeks, with a focus on dance and drama are organised to supplement work in personal and social development. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is improving because of more regular computer access and the use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Although the curriculum generally meets the needs of pupils, the school is well aware there are areas for improvement. Teachers' planning, for example, does not systematically promote literacy and numeracy in other subjects or provide enough challenging activities for more able pupils. Above all, though, everyday lessons are not stimulating or diverse enough to improve pupils' achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff look after pupils well. Good systems for risk assessment and child protection, for example, ensure pupils' safety and well-being. It is no surprise, therefore, that pupils say they feel secure in school and feel comfortable approaching all staff for advice or support. The school gives a high priority to promoting healthy lifestyles yet does not monitor whether pupils actually put this learning into practice, by eating wisely for example.

Teachers give pupils very good guidance to help them improve their work. Procedures for target-setting and the quality of marking leave pupils in no doubt about their progress and give very helpful tips for improvement. The school works hard to involve parents with their children's learning, with some success. A close link with the nearby nursery eases children's start to school, but the school wishes to do more to help pupils move to their next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed, especially by the headteacher. Her decisive and knowledgeable leadership has had a significant impact on the school's progress in the two years since her appointment. She has strengthened teaching, improved the level of care and pupils' behaviour, and established a cohesive approach to management. The headteacher gives the school a clear sense of direction that is shared by all staff and governors.

The school knows itself well. It has correctly identified its strengths and the areas that need developing, such as writing. Senior staff are efficient at monitoring teaching and pupils' progress, but are not yet proficient enough at drawing sharp conclusions that take account of all pupils. Action plans for improvement focus on relevant issues but are not as detailed as they could be to ensure a swifter pace of change.

Governance is satisfactory. Although several governors are experienced and well-informed, most are new. They are eager to support the school and have readily undertaken training, but they do not yet play a full role in the school's development. The school is good at seeking and responding to parents' opinions. Communication with parents, for example, has improved through a detailed website and weekly newsletters. Parents think highly of the school.

In the considerable time since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress. However, recent improvements are beginning to bring dividends and the systems now in place are robust enough to indicate that the school is well placed to improve further.

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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	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	2	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?	3	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	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 Susan Ellis

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NE15 0BJ

24 March 2006

Dear children

Mr McKay and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school, and meeting you and your teachers. Thank you very much for your help during the inspection. We believe that your school gives you a satisfactory education because:

you work hard and get on well with one another

you are responsible, usually behave well and know how to keep yourselves healthy

your teachers are very good at telling you how well you are doing and give you excellent advice about improving your work

there are plenty of interesting activities and visits that enliven your learning

the adults in the school care for you and make sure you are healthy and safe

your headteacher has done well to improve the school since she came.

However, your school could be better if:

teachers make sure that you always work as hard as you can so that you improve your skills in numeracy and literacy, especially in writing

lessons are more exciting and varied to make them more interesting and give you a wider view of the world

all plans to improve subjects are more efficient.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Additional Inspector