



Corbridge Church of England Aided First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122287
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281220
Inspection dates 16 March 2006 to 17 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Graeme Clarke

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | First | School address | St Helen's Lane |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Corbridge |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 9 | | Northumberland NE45 5JQ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01434 632534 |
| Number on roll | 155 | Fax number | 01434 634568 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr Ron Tipping |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 May 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Ali Barden |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school serves an area with relatively high social and economic advantage. The school's roll has been static over recent years. Most pupils are of white British origin. A well below average number take free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The school is part of a local networked community of schools. It has the Gold Artsmark, Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, and the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school that it provides outstanding education. Children begin nursery with abilities ranging from above to below the Northumberland average. They make excellent progress because of outstanding teaching in the nursery and reception (the Foundation Stage), and reach above average standards. High quality teaching continues to help children make excellent progress. Last year they attained very high standards in Year 2 tests, except at the highest level of reading. By Year 4 good teaching sustains pupils' very high standards in English and in mathematics, although some with lower ability attain at the county average.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils really enjoy school and attendance is good. The school provides excellent care and support and promotes outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Taking into account the excellent use of resources, pupils' backgrounds, their starting points and progress and their attainment by Year 4, the school gives exceedingly good value for money.

Leadership and management are exceptional. The headteacher and governors systematically evaluate the school's work and accurately gauge most aspects, but modestly understate its accomplishments. The school successfully addressed all issues from the last inspection and is now dealing effectively with concerns that stem from recent tests. The headteacher's very effective leadership sets an exemplary tone for learning, and promotes the school's Christian ethos and a clear philosophy that here, every child does matter. The capacity for further improvement is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

Address issues it has already identified, specifically:

- pupils' reading comprehension in Years 1 and 2 and mathematics attainment in Years 3 and 4.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Children enter nursery with a wide range of abilities but their personal and literacy standards are below the county average. Children make excellent progress and do better than expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Children continue to make excellent progress and last year attained very high results in the Year 2 tests in writing and mathematics. Reading comprehension was close to average at Level 3. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 sustain their progress and very high attainment and do as well as, or better than expected on the basis of their Year 2 tests. The school adds good value to pupils' knowledge and understanding. In 2005, results in Year 4 tests were well above the Northumberland average. Results did not come up to the school's very challenging targets in mathematics and it rightly identifies why a few lower attaining pupils did not do as well as hoped.

Currently, many children throughout make exceptional progress and achieve very well. Pupils' standards, especially in reading, are well above those expected of their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve and make progress as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Pupils know about and respect other people's lifestyles. When responding to the world around them they show sensitivity and concern; for example, older pupils wrote to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair and Mr Tony Benn on global issues concerning them and received replies which they valued highly.

Pupils greatly enjoy school and respond positively to the many exciting and fun opportunities available. This markedly supports their progress and is reflected in their good attendance, and excellent relationships and behaviour throughout the school. Pupils feel safe. Their awareness of healthy living is outstanding as they enthusiastically take part in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils make an exceptional contribution. The school council plays an influential role in school life; for example, creating the playground 'friendship bench'. They work with many charities and with children from the local special school. Very good links with the network community of local schools ensures pupils are prepared well for economic well-being and enhances their language, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Of particular note, was the expertise Year 3 and 4 pupils proudly demonstrated when displaying their digital filming and animation skills developed during 'Film Fortnight'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is good overall with outstanding teaching seen throughout the school in almost half the lessons. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and the children make excellent progress, especially in their language and social development. Excellent progress elsewhere results from good and outstanding teaching and the positive climate for learning which permeates the whole school. The school sets very high standards and works effectively to improve teaching quality even further. A great strength is that teachers know the children very well. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan activities that effectively build on pupils' prior learning and align them closely to everyone's abilities. Much is achieved because the pace of lessons is brisk and activities challenge pupils. Teachers pass on their enthusiasm for learning through good subject knowledge. Practical activities and games make learning fun. ICT, including film making, is used very effectively to support learning and capture pupils' interests. Pupils are taught to reflect together on what they have learned and what they need to do to improve. The school makes every effort to include parents in

their children's learning. Support staff are an asset in helping pupils with additional learning needs so that they achieve successfully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers an outstanding curriculum which contributes immensely to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Careful organisation ensures pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can take part in all activities and gifted and talented pupils are helped to achieve very well. Children in the Foundation Stage have very good first hand experiences which lead to excellent progress. An excellent programme of personal, social and health education, evident in all school life, enables pupils to become good learners. Many participate in a very wide range of extension activities, including sport, music, dance and drama, which enrich their experience. Spanish teaching is very successful, for example, in enabling younger pupils confidently to hold a conversation with their peers. Educational outings, such as to a residential outdoor pursuit centre, and visitors add to the richness of experience. Parents make a vital contribution to the curriculum; for example, working with the children to make the 'friendship bench'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school successfully promotes a caring environment. All staff are aware of the needs of pupils and ensure they feel valued and supported. Pupils say that adults look after and support them very well in dealing with their concerns. Parents speak warmly of the care their children receive. Teachers diligently track pupils' academic progress well, set appropriate and often challenging targets, and involve them in assessing their progress. Clear and up-to-date systems for child protection are in place and excellent procedures to safeguard pupils are regularly reviewed. The school rigorously assesses and deals with the risks faced by pupils on visits and other events. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support and the school ensures links with outside agencies and parents are very successful. Very good procedures ensure children settle quickly into school and that there is a smooth transition to middle school education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management throughout the school play a crucial part in promoting the Christian ethos and very positive climate for learning that all pupils thrive in and enjoy. The headteacher and governors diligently analyse and monitor pupils' work and all aspects of school life. Foundation and key stage leaders enhance this process. Governors are fully involved, in partnership with the headteacher, to evaluate the school's work accurately, although they are somewhat modest in gauging pupils' high standards and accomplishments. Of particular value is the way they gain

a good grasp of the school's work, and support improvement from their very effective 'business excellence' process for information gathering and support. They make a major contribution to helping all staff develop expertise to raise achievement further. The school has successfully addressed all issues raised at the last inspection. Accurate spelling and handwriting have prominence. Subject leaders play a key role in monitoring and evaluating the school. Parents are very satisfied with the information they receive about their children's performance. Parents are delighted with their children's progress, and that they enjoy school and feel safe. The headteacher demonstrates commitment and determination to improve the school more and more. One parent's comment encapsulates the vital contribution she makes: '(she) is an enthusiastic and inspiring headteacher who cares deeply about the children in her charge'. She has ensured very good progress on addressing issues of achievement the school recently identified in reading comprehension and mathematics. The capacity for further improvement is excellent.

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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? | 1 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 1 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | 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 | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 1 | 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 | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | 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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The Children

Corbridge CofE Aided First School

St Helen's Lane

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Northumberland

NE45 5JQ

18 March 2006

Dear Children,

Well, what a lovely school you have. We really enjoyed visiting you for two days when we came to see how well you are doing. It was very important for us to find out what you do and also how you help with running the school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms to see you at work. You were always very polite. We were very impressed with the work that you do. We especially liked the films you made – you really are experts. We also loved the way some of you showed us how well you can speak to one another in Spanish. We enjoyed talking to you when we met those of you on the school council and some of you at lunch time. It was great to see how much you enjoy coming to school.

What we liked about your school

Yours is a very, very good school with a very friendly atmosphere. You are being taught very well and you make enormous progress with your work. You are really well behaved, have good manners, and work hard. Mrs Barden, the other teachers and all the staff are very proud of you. Mrs Barden is an exceptionally good headteacher. She, the governors and staff all want to help you to do even better, so please listen to what they say. You are safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well.

What we think could be improved

We've made some suggestions for the governors and Mrs Barden to think about.

We've asked them to find ways to help those of you in Years 1 and 2 understand more about what you read. We've also asked them to help some of you do better in mathematics by the end of Year 4. This is because last year, test scores were not as

high as your teachers hoped they would be. We think with a little more help you should be able to get higher marks.

With best wishes to you all.

Graeme Clarke
Lead inspector