

Archibald First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108438
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	288099
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Bell
Headteacher	Miss Jackie Joicey
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003
School address	Archibald Street Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 1EB
Telephone number	0191 285 1957
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than most other first schools. It is in an area of average social and economic circumstances. The number of pupils who claim a free school meal is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Most pupils are White British, although the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased and is now similar to the national average. A small proportion of these pupils is at an early stage of English language acquisition. On entry to the Nursery, the children's attainment overall is broadly as expected with the full range of abilities represented.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has a number of strengths, mostly relating to the provision it makes for pupils' personal development and how well it enriches pupils' educational experiences. Pupils enjoy school; they have good attitudes to work and behave well. This is a significant factor in the pleasant atmosphere that prevails throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with moral and social development being particularly strong features. By the time they leave school, pupils know right from wrong, are polite, caring and confident. The school's care for pupils is a major strength and the issues raised at the last inspection have been fully resolved. Relationships within the school are very good and pupils say they feel secure. Parents find staff approachable and helpful when difficulties or concerns arise. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe as a result of the good care and guidance they receive. They take their responsibility for the school and wider community very seriously. By Year 4, pupils have developed into well-rounded individuals who have developed appropriate skills to help them in later life.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage where they get off to a solid start in their learning and receive a good grounding in their basic skills. The tracking of their achievements, teaching and learning are well linked and, consequently, well matched to the needs of all the children. In Years 1 to 4, pupils' progress is satisfactory; this is because teaching is inconsistent from class to class. There is some good teaching but it is satisfactory overall because it does not always ensure that pupils learn at a consistently good pace. In some classes, the teaching does little to motivate or interest pupils and they become passive learners. They are expected to do no more than steadily work through the tasks expected for pupils of their age, although many are capable of more challenging work. As a result, standards in both Key Stages 1 and 2 are broadly average.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched with many extra activities that are greatly valued by pupils. These creative and innovative initiatives do not impact as positively as they should on pupils' academic achievement. This is attributable to inconsistencies in teaching and some weaknesses in the curriculum planned for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils in Year 2 do not have enough opportunities to develop a wide enough range of writing skills and, throughout the school, pupils spend too much time in numeracy lessons carrying out basic number operations.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school uses a wide range of self-evaluation procedures, which provides them with a satisfactory and broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This information is used particularly well to target support towards those pupils who need help with their learning and to plan new curriculum initiatives. What is less successful is the use of the information gathered from tracking pupils' progress to set challenging targets. Similarly, although the school is aware that in some classes teaching is rarely better than satisfactory, actions to bring about improvement are not yet having the desired impact. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall quality of teaching.
- Improve curriculum planning for literacy and numeracy.
- Use of the information gathered from monitoring activities to raise standards and accelerate achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. From their wide range of starting points, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, with the majority attaining standards that are generally above those expected when they enter Year 1. The exceptions to this are standards in communication, language and literacy and physical development, which are as expected.

In national tests at the end of Year 2, including the most recent in 2006, pupils' standards have been consistently above the national average. Standards in writing have been consistently in line with the national average with boys not doing as well as girls. Pupils who have English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are doing as well as, or better than, their peers nationally.

The school's data and inspection evidence indicate that currently pupils, whatever their prior ability, make satisfactory progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2 resulting in standards that are above average in reading but average in writing and mathematics. There are three main reasons why progress has slowed in writing and mathematics. Although there are several classes where teaching is good, there are too many where teaching is rarely better than satisfactory. This is compounded in Year 2 where the curriculum for the teaching of writing is narrow and, consequently, pupils are not taught a broad enough range of skills. Similarly, throughout the school, pupils are provided with too few opportunities to practise and apply their skills in all aspects of mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they like most subjects and particularly enjoy the special themed days such as the art and technology day. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. There is a calm atmosphere during lessons and pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. Despite pupils' enthusiasm for school, attendance is only satisfactory as many have holidays in term time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Young children are learning to understand their feelings and all pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect for the views of others, whatever their beliefs or background. They know about, and discuss, other faiths and cultures with a maturity beyond their years. This, together with the satisfactory development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, means that pupils develop the attitudes and knowledge needed to make them responsible and useful citizens.

Pupils have a good understanding of how they can contribute to their own and others' safety at school and how they can manage risk in their lives beyond school. They confirm that they know where to seek help if troubled. Pupils understand the need for regular exercise and talk at length about the impact of this and healthy eating. They readily take part in various physical

activities. Pupils, particularly those who are members of the school council, respond well to the opportunities provided for them to be involved in decision making processes. They make a good contribution to the wider community through fund-raising activities and links with local churches and numerous charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Throughout the school, classes are managed effectively, resulting in pupils' good behaviour and an effective climate for learning. Teaching assistants and resources are well deployed to support learning; this is particularly effective for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language. For example, effective use of information and communication technology resources helps those at an early stage of English language acquisition to overcome the barriers this poses to their learning. Other strengths in teaching are less consistent resulting in classes where teaching is sound but rarely inspires or motivates pupils into making good progress. In these classes, pupils spend too much time as passive listeners and completing mundane tasks. It is to the pupils' credit that they maintain good attitudes to learning and work well independently, ensuring their satisfactory achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory with strengths in the opportunities it provides for pupils to develop as independent, confident and happy learners. Opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy are good, as are those for enrichment, which are varied and very much enjoyed. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils experience creativity in their learning and have been recently rewarded for their efforts with the ArtsMark Silver Award. There are weaknesses, however, in the breadth and balance of the curriculum for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and this is one of the reasons why pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good. In Year 2, curriculum planning pays too much attention to the development of a narrow range of writing skills. This has traditionally helped pupils to do well in national tests. However, as they move into Key Stage 2, where the curriculum is much more varied, pupils lack the experience of writing for a range of purposes and this slows their progress. In mathematics, although the curriculum meets statutory requirements, pupils' tasks are mainly centred on improving their knowledge and skills of calculation. As a result, their progress in other aspects of mathematics is slower and this leads to progress that is no better than satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. This is because it is made clear to every pupil that they matter and they are well cared for. Arrangements for safeguarding children meet national guidelines. Pupils feel very safe at school; they trust staff and have confidence in them to deal with anything they are concerned about. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants who help them to learn as well as others in their class. There are good links with

other agencies to provide support for all pupils' well-being. Arrangements for starting at school and moving on to middle school are securely in place.

The school's information about how well pupils are doing is used effectively to help pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve. As a result, pupils take ownership of their learning; they are confident and have good levels of self-belief. However, pupils are not always reminded of how to use this knowledge to best effect on a day-to-day basis in lessons. Consequently, opportunities are missed for increasing the rate of pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school uses a wide range of monitoring and evaluation systems, which provides a clear picture of the quality of the provision and how well pupils are doing. This information is used well to create a school where pupils are safe and effectively develop the personal skills, which will benefit them and society in the future. The headteacher and senior staff are successful in introducing what are often innovative initiatives to bring about improvement and to target support to those who have difficulty with their learning. For example, interventions to improve the quality of boys' writing are closing the gap between the standards reached by girls and boys. The school's leadership has been less successful in using assessment information to set challenging targets and in its efforts to improve the overall quality of teaching.

Curriculum leaders regularly monitor provision in their subjects and this is a satisfactory improvement since the time of the last inspection. At times, however, their monitoring lacks rigour and, as a result, they do not ensure that curriculum decisions are implemented effectively by all staff. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the information provided to them, particularly by the headteacher. Governors acknowledge that they have been accepting of some weaknesses and have not asked critical questions about the impact of these on pupils' achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Archibald First School, Archibald Street, Gosforth

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for giving up your time to talk with us. You provided us with a lot of valuable information. You go to a very caring school and you are making steady progress in your lessons. We saw lots of good behaviour. You told us that you all feel safe and secure in school because there is always someone there to help you if you are worried about anything. It was good to see that you take lots of exercise and know about healthy eating.

We agree with you that there are many exciting creative activities for you to be involved in and we have asked the school to make sure that you also have a good variety of tasks in mathematics and writing. We have also asked the school to make sure that you are taught well in all of your classes and that the information they have about how well the school is doing is used to make it even better.

You can help with this by attending regularly and always trying your best. Once again, thank you for the help and welcome which you gave to the inspection team.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector