



South Gosforth First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108439
Local Authority Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 288100
Inspection date 5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Dave Byrne

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

Type of school	First	School address	Alnmouth Drive
School category	Community		South Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	4-9		Tyne and Wear, NE3 1YF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2853453
Number on roll (school)	225	Fax number	0191 2853453
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Salter
		Headteacher	Mr Peter Coles
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002		

Age group 4-9	Inspection date 5 October 2006	Inspection number 288100
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils are from advantaged backgrounds. This is reflected in a below average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Across the school a below average percentage of pupils are identified with learning and behavioural difficulties. A significant minority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few are at the early stage of acquiring English. The school provides extended care for children before and after school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. The headteacher's outstanding leadership, supported by an effective staff, provides good management that ensures good achievement for pupils who reach high standards both academically and personally. Good teaching challenges pupils and successfully extends the above average skills and knowledge that the large majority bring with them from home. After an effective start in the Foundation Stage, the pupils' good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve very well in the national tests at the end of Year 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are all well above average. As pupils move onto Years 3 and 4, they continue to progress well. At the end of Year 4, the school's assessment data shows that the high levels achieved in Year 2 have been maintained. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language benefit from good support from teaching assistants. As a result they progress as well as their classmates.

It is not just academic standards that are very high. Pupils respond very positively to the very caring nature of the school and its lively and exciting atmosphere. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This contributes to pupils' excellent attitudes and their exemplary behaviour. In each classroom, pupils work diligently and at all times they are polite and friendly with others. They develop good levels of self-reliance and confidence but despite their undoubted abilities, they are not made fully aware by the staff of what they need to do to improve their own performance. Parents are a much valued part of the school. They are very supportive and commend not only its academic performance but also its very good levels of care, support and guidance. A comment from a parent sums up what the vast majority of parents and their children think, 'Everyone at South Gosforth is part of a larger family'.

Visits to local places of interest such as Ouseburn Museum and contributions from specialist teachers in music, French and physical education all exemplify the way pupils are inspired by a lively and exciting curriculum. Their love of learning is seen in the pleasure on their faces during lessons and in the school's very good attendance rates. Pupils are well aware of how to be healthy and safe and those who take school lunches benefit from nutritious and tasty meals. Great care is taken by the staff to protect pupils and ensure that all possible risks are removed.

At the heart of the school, there is a very caring headteacher and a strong team of staff who set high standards whilst constantly seeking improvement. Resources are used effectively and the high quality accommodation is exploited well to benefit pupils. Recent investments have boosted provision for music and information and communication technology (ICT). However, facilities for children's learning outdoors in the Foundation Stage are not as good as they should be. Finances are astutely managed to achieve good value for money. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school is well placed to build on this improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to understand more effectively what they need to do to improve.
- Make better provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement in the school is good. Children join school in Reception with skills and knowledge that exceed what is normally found for children of their age. As a result of good teaching in the Foundation Stage, children are extended in their thinking and are well prepared for their next stage of education. Most children exceed nationally expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, good teaching and good support from home contributes to continued good progress. The more able are stretched, and the lower attainers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also improve their skills and knowledge at a good rate. At the end of Year 2, pupils perform very well in the national tests. In each of the last five years, results have been well above the national average for seven-year-olds. Pupils do particularly well in reading and mathematics and their writing is also of a high standard. Rigorously gathered school assessment data show that the good progress continues in Years 3 and 4. In Year 4, many pupils work at levels that are two years above those expected for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have exceptional attitudes and their behaviour is exemplary. The high levels of enjoyment of school are reflected in the very high rates of attendance. Through assemblies and the planned curriculum, pupils have excellent opportunities for reflection, celebration and consideration of different cultures. Pupils act safely and know about the importance of eating healthily. The wide range of sports available at school, including an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, and the opportunities for pupils to cycle to school, demonstrate the school's commitment to enable pupils to keep fit. Pupils have self-belief and the confidence to take on responsibility. Those in Year 4 make valuable contributions to school life by helping in the playground and also helping new children in Reception. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school and local community. Their very good academic and social skills prepare pupils extremely well for their next stage of education and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. Teachers are dedicated and very hard working. They have high expectations, plan lessons that interest and motivate pupils and help them towards independence in their learning. Some very high quality displays in classrooms inspires and reinforces pupils' good work. Relationships with pupils are excellent and provide invaluable support and encouragement. Everyone is fully included in lessons and teachers manage new arrivals very well. Teaching assistants give invaluable support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and make sure that they progress well towards the targets in their individual education plans. Occasionally, not enough is done to exploit the pupils' good speaking skills to explore their ideas and opinions. Pupils thrive on imaginative teaching. This was noticeable during a lesson exploring the way people lived in Victorian times. Pupils were totally engrossed in role play related to characters who lived in Victorian Ouseburn. Pupils enjoyed this and learnt rapidly. Marking accurately corrects pupils' work, but it does not help them sufficiently to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of activities that inspires them to learn. Good provision in the Foundation Stage, except for aspects of outdoor learning, gives children a good start to school life. In Years 1 to 4, a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT makes sure that good basic skills are successfully gained by virtually all pupils. Well established links with local schools enhance the provision for the gifted and talented by providing master classes in subjects such as mathematics, writing and art and design. Effective adaptations are made to the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those learning English as an additional language. The range of extra-curricular activities, and levels of pupil participation, is outstanding and there is a very good range of visits and visitors which enhance learning in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for very well. The safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority and ensures that pupils feel safe in school and can trust their teachers and other adults. Pupils receive helpful guidance on how to improve their academic standards but they are not as clear as they might be about how to do even better. Pupils' personal development is successfully encouraged and rewarded. Pupils have great pride when they receive a certificate for outstanding achievement during assembly or points for their good work in class. Good links with parents keep them fully informed about their child's progress and how they can provide support at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is a well led, managed and governed school that provides good value for money. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'This is a school that not only cares about standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but also about the well-being and personality of my child'. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership because of his level of care and clear educational direction. Together with a strong staff team, he has a clear vision where the pupils' achievement, both academic and personal, is paramount. Effective procedures for monitoring standards of teaching and learning, coupled with a strong system for performance management and assessment of pupils' achievement, combine to provide an accurate picture of priorities for school improvement. Governors provide effective support whilst making sure that the school does not become complacent and continually strives to improve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

South Gosforth First School

Alnmouth Drive

South Gosforth

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE3 1YF

5 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really appreciated the help you gave me in sharing your work and your ideas about the school. These are some of the things I found out about your school:

- you have a super headteacher and great teachers who take very good care of you
- lessons are fun and you seem to really enjoy school. This helps you to do very well in reading, writing, mathematics and science
- your behaviour and the way you treat others are excellent
- the school gives you a fantastic range of after school clubs and activities
- if you really struggle with your work the help you get is really good
- you know how important it is to eat healthy food and keep fit and your school meals are healthy but very tasty.

We have asked the school to help you in two simple ways:

- help you to know how you can do even better by involving you more in knowing how you can improve
- find ways of giving children in Reception better resources for learning outdoors.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful.

Yours faithfully

Dave Byrne

Lead Inspector