



Farne Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108455
Local Authority Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 288103
Inspection date 18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Margaret Shepherd

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Marsden Lane
School category	Community		Newbiggin Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, NE5 4AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2860268
Number on roll (school)	234	Fax number	0191 2860268
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ralph Crozier
		Headteacher	Ms Liz Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an estate with social and economic circumstances that are below average. There is more than twice the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than usual and a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children join the Nursery with below average overall attainment and well below average attainment in communication, language and literacy. A small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language have just joined the school. The school has undergone several key changes since the previous inspection; it has changed its status from a first school to a primary school and has a different headteacher and deputy headteacher. There have also been several staff changes in the junior classes.

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. The partnership with parents is excellent and parents are very enthusiastic about their school and feel valued. Although the headteacher is relatively new to the school, she has set a clear direction for its work, sustaining the momentum of developments already in place and bringing in new ideas that have resulted in improved standards. Achievement is consistently good through the school because of good teaching and learning in each key stage and because the curriculum is well-balanced. Good foundations are laid in the Nursery and Reception classes and pupils continue to make good progress through the school. Pupils begin their education in the Nursery with below average standards and leave the school with average standards. They make very good progress in science and standards are above average in Year 6 in this subject. This is due to the teachers' good subject knowledge and careful attention to assessment and planning. Standards in writing have risen throughout the school because of the headteacher's whole-school initiatives in developing teaching and the curriculum in this subject. However, the achievement of boys is inconsistent because the school has not yet devised whole-school systems to ensure that the teaching and the curriculum match boys' particular needs. The school has very effective systems in place to develop pupils' art and design skills, resulting in standards that are higher than those expected for their age.

Staff work very well together to provide good quality care, support and guidance. This results in good standards in personal development and some outstanding features. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. This is partly the result of imaginative initiatives in the school, such as Funkey Monkey and Huffin Puffins. It is also due to a clear emphasis on sport and the use of the school's high quality sports hall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, as is their behaviour. They enjoy their lessons and the many clubs that are available. Pupils contribute well to the school community; the buddy system and the school council work effectively. Pupils are prepared well for their future lives through the development of basic skills and in learning how to work together and to be flexible. There is a very good range of opportunities for parents and their children to learn together as part of the school's initiatives to support the community. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is well-balanced and results in good achievement. The school is in the very early stages of supporting pupils with English as an additional language; these pupils have not been in the school for very long and are not making the same good rate of progress as their classmates.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a very effective team. They analyse data carefully, identify the school's needs efficiently and support staff well in making changes. The governing body is effective and knows the school well. Despite the changes since the previous inspection, improvement has been good. The enthusiasm and commitment of all staff, together with the well-focused leadership and management, ensure that the school has a good capacity to improve. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should:

- ensure the consistency of boys' achievement through the school
- extend provision for the pupils with English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good through the school and standards are average by the time the pupils are ready for secondary school. Children enter the Nursery with standards below average for their age overall but well below in aspects of communication, language and literacy. They make a very good start in the Nursery with tasks matched closely to children's individual needs. Progress is sustained in Reception and is particularly good in reading owing to the clear programme of work based on learning the sounds of letters and words. By the end of Reception, many children have reached the expected levels although overall standards are still slightly below average.

Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Teachers are well established in these classes and provide stimulating lessons. In Year 2, standards are above average overall, and in 2005 were above average in writing and average in reading and maths. The particularly good progress in writing is due to a strong emphasis on the subject with a major initiative introduced by the headteacher to develop basic skills across a wide range of writing styles.

Pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 2. In 2005, the test results rose from average in the previous year and were above average. In 2006, the results were lower but still in line with the national average. The school met its targets, which were challenging for this particular Year 6 class, which had a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Standards in science were above average; they were sustained in 2006 and reflect the good subject knowledge of the teachers, the thorough coverage of the science curriculum and the detailed assessment systems. The school was particularly successful in 2006 in the proportion of pupils exceeding the standard expected for their age in writing and this is again due to the same writing initiative that was so successful in Key Stage 1. The inspection confirms the national data and judges that the current achievement throughout the school is clearly good, with some very good features. Standards in art and design are above the standards expected nationally. Pupils produce some very sensitive and detailed pieces of work across different materials.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Their needs are identified early and careful programmes are organised to meet their needs. Their sessions with the co-ordinator are particularly successful and support the learning of basic skills very well. Analysis of school data shows that the achievement of boys is inconsistent throughout the school. In some classes boys achieve at least as well as the girls, whereas in others, they do not achieve as well. The new pupils who have English as an additional

language have settled into the school routines but their academic progress is not as good as that of the rest of the class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good with some outstanding features. Pupils have a good understanding of staying safe and healthy. The older pupils have a particularly good understanding of healthy living; for example, through the very good programme of work in science on issues such as micro-organisms. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are all fully involved in the very high quality assemblies. They perform extremely confidently and with great sensitivity in presentations such as gospel songs and are extremely keen to volunteer to join the key speakers in explaining moral and spiritual principles. They are very respectful during prayers. Pupils enjoy their lessons and expect to concentrate hard and do their best. Behaviour is outstanding, even when pupils are confined within the building owing to adverse weather conditions. The school has worked hard to improve attendance. It has been rising steadily and is now close to average. Pupils make very good contributions to the school community. Older pupils enjoy their roles as buddies. The school council works well and the councillors take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils are prepared well for their future lives by gaining basic skills and in learning to be flexible and to work together in teams.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good in each of the key stages. Teachers work in very effective partnership with their teaching assistants. This supports the achievement of individuals and groups very well. The teachers use computers very effectively across a range of different contexts. Whole-class sessions are enhanced by the use of interactive whiteboards; for example, to show digital photographs of pupils' visits out of school as a focus for writing. Pupils' learning is particularly good when teachers organise the use of handheld computers to record their responses. This develops information and communication technology basic skills very well. However, teachers do not consistently provide carefully matched activities to meet the particular needs of boys' learning. Staff make use of their assessments well when they plan lessons and this is an outstanding feature of the Nursery. The teachers support the personal needs of pupils with English as an additional language effectively but do not have enough strategies to support their academic learning, which reduces their rate of progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well balanced and provides a range of interesting experiences that match pupils' interests well. For example, the Nursery theme of teddy bears captivates children's attention. There are several good whole-school projects that promote safe and healthy living well, such as the Funkey Monkey and the Huffin Puffins healthy living projects. The curriculum for science, writing and art and design is particularly effective and has a very positive impact on standards. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties is good and includes effective use of individualised computer programs. There is a very good range of clubs available, particularly for sports and dance. The well-appointed sports hall supports this provision very well. The school has considered some of the curriculum needs of boys and is now in a good position to extend this through the use of topics to extend links across different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's care, support and guidance are good with outstanding features. Staff know individual pupils and their families very well and pupils are confident that adults will help them if they are worried. The partnership with parents is excellent with a wide range of family learning projects available. The school uses external agencies and personnel well to support its provision. For example, there are strong links with the local vicar and his contributions to the school's provision, such as assemblies, support pupils' personal development extremely well. Very good personal guidance is in place and the academic guidance is improving through the development of assessment initiatives. Transition arrangements between the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 classes are very good. Procedures are in place to safeguard children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Despite the changes of key leaders in the school, leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made a very good start and ensured that the transition between the previous leadership team and the current one went smoothly. She has a very clear vision about the way the school needs to develop and has established a high level of trust between staff, pupils and their parents. She introduces effectively key initiatives that raise standards. The recent reallocation of key responsibilities means that middle managers are new to their duties. They are very enthusiastic about future developments. The school's governance is good. The governors fulfil their responsibility to hold the senior leaders to account. Governors have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the school's provision and performance. The hard work of the staff has ensured that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection despite the significant changes. The school's good self-evaluation, high morale and

commitment to providing an education that meets the needs of the community ensure that the school has a good capacity to improve in future.

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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?	1
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

Farne Primary School

Marsden Lane

Newbiggin Hall

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE5 4AP

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so welcoming to me when I came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering my questions.

I was really impressed with how hard you are all working to improve your writing and the standards that you reach by the time you leave school. You also do really well in science and art and design and the work that you do in these subjects is good. The children in the nursery are doing really well in learning about different types of teddy bears. I thought that your behaviour was excellent, even though you couldn't go outside because of that awful wind and rain. You were all excellent in assembly. You greeted each other really well and I enjoyed the gospel singing. You are very respectful when you are saying your prayers. You told me all sorts of ways to keep safe and healthy and you obviously enjoy all your clubs especially the Funkey Monkey and Huffin Puffins. I enjoyed talking to your school council. They are working hard to make your school better for you all. I thought that your buddy system works well. All your teachers work very hard to help you to learn and they use computers well. Your headteacher and deputy headteacher work well to make your school a better place to learn and your governors care about making your school a great place to be.

You do all sorts of things to help you to improve. Boys, you could do even better by making sure that you learn more in every lesson. You could also help the new children who haven't learnt English yet to understand what they have to do.

I really enjoyed my visit to your school and I hope that you all do your best in future to make it an even better place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd

Additional Inspector