



Frosterley Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114062
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289797
Inspection dates 5–6 October 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Cressey

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Bridge End |
| School category | Community | | Frosterley, Weardale |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 2SN |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01388 528358 |
| Number on roll (school) | 67 | Fax number | 0000 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Pamela Pearson |
| | | Headteacher | Mr Michael Sharland |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school is set in the rural area of Weardale. Almost all the children come from White British backgrounds. Three quarters of the children are from Frosterley itself and the others travel from neighbouring villages. The school numbers fluctuate throughout the year with significant numbers both leaving and arriving. Although the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average the number has doubled in the last year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average although in some year groups it is well over half of the pupils. The school provides a breakfast club and liaises with a local Nursery to provide before and after school care.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

‘Every day is a good day at Fosterley.’

This comment by one parent echoes the views of the vast majority of parents and the inspection agrees with them. Frosterley Community School is a good school. Its own evaluation provides an accurate insight into the quality and impact of its provision. Parents, governors and local businesses are all very proud of their school and its exceptionally strong links with the village and world community. The school’s success is due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and governing body. Together they create an environment which prepares all pupils exceptionally well to be successful learners, who are responsible, well informed and tolerant members of society. This is reflected in the very good provision to promote pupils’ personal and social development so that they have a good understanding of how to stay safe, healthy and form good relationships. The schools’ commitment to the community is best shown by the fact that the school’s sports day is held on a Sunday so that all the villagers can attend; it is followed by an exceptionally well attended annual parents’ meeting and a barbeque for the entire school community.

No matter what standards of attainment pupils have when they enter this very happy school they achieve well and most reach the standards expected for them in relation to their ages and abilities. Pupils do well because teaching is good. It is well matched to individual needs and provides pupils with the skills they need to succeed as learners. Pupils particularly benefit from knowing exactly what they need to do to improve in English but are not as clear about their success in mathematics and science. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good but there are insufficient high quality resources especially for those tasks children choose for themselves.

The pupils in this school are developing an exceptionally clear understanding of different faiths and cultures. This is done through a programme of personal, social and health education and religious education. This work is supported through links with nearby urban schools and links with a school in China. Both local and international partners are involved in adding an exciting dimension to the pupils’ learning and preparing them exceptionally well for life in a global community.

The parents’ confidence in the leadership and management of the school is rightly placed and the school really does live up to its title of ‘community school’. It gives good value for money, has built well on the successes of the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good assessment systems in English are used across the school so that teachers and pupils know precisely the next steps in learning.
- Provide high quality resources in the Foundation Stage especially for those activities children choose for themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils achieve well and attain the standards expected for their ages and abilities. There is no marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The small number of pupils on role makes any comparison with data from national test results unreliable and paints an inaccurate picture of the standards and achievement each child makes whilst in Frosterley School.

Standards on entry to the school are broadly average. Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals and are well launched into reading, writing and mathematics by the time they move into Year 1. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils achieve the expected standards for their ages and a significant number exceed them. By the end of Year 6 those pupils who have been in the school since the Reception class meet the ambitious targets set for them and achieve or exceed the standard expected for their age. Over fifty per cent do very well and reach the higher levels of which they are capable. Standards in English are usually higher than in mathematics and science because assessments are less rigorous in these subjects. Pupils who arrive from other schools, often with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. As a result these pupils make very good progress and are often able to reach the expected standards for their age, especially in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. They enjoy each other's company, get on well together and behave well in lessons. Behaviour at lunch time, though good natured, can become boisterous because there are insufficient activities for pupils. The reputation of the very effective school council is so good that it is helping another school to set up their own council.

Older pupils relish the care they can provide for younger pupils through being a 'buddy' at lunchtime or helping pupils to get their milk. Pupils are becoming more aware of the importance of healthy snacks and lunches and their views on the quality of their meals are leading to some improvements in what is offered to them. The pupils are exceptionally well informed about how to keep themselves safe and value the 'Rural Rangers' project which equips them well to be aware of the dangers of life in a rural area. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of their responsibility to their own village and to the wider global community. They are very proud of their contribution to the development of an eco-project in the local quarry and their role as guides to visitors. Equally they are fascinated by their links with China and say getting to know another country helps you to learn to respect different beliefs and ways of life. All in all pupils are well prepared with the necessary skills for life in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and ensures that all pupils, no matter what their backgrounds or abilities, achieve well. A significant strength is the way lessons are planned to meet the needs of different ages and abilities in mixed-age classes. Flexible grouping allows pupils who have complex learning needs to be taught in a lower age group and those who are gifted and talented can be found working a full year ahead of their chronological age. This ensures that all pupils are challenged to achieve their potential. Teachers use different teaching styles, tasks and activities to maintain the interest of both boys and girls and this is helping to ensure that there is little difference in their progress and attainment. The teaching of English is particularly good because marking and assessments are of a very high quality. Each piece of work is meticulously marked and pupils are provided with information on how well they have met the learning objectives and what they need to do to improve further. The focussed teaching in small groups for pupils with learning difficulties is excellent. Pupils are given the precise tools they need to be successful and confident learners and as a result many of these pupils reach the expected level for their ages. In the Foundation Stage resources for those activities children choose for themselves are not sufficiently challenging and so there are missed opportunities to extend their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good emphasis in curriculum planning on developing pupils' basic skills, along with an innovative programme of social and health education, provides the pupils with necessary tools to develop personal safety and healthy living and prepares them well with the skills for life in the twenty first century.

The decision to create a separate Reception class provides the youngest children with a good early years curriculum and they quickly learn to be effective readers, writers and mathematicians. In Key Stage 1 and 2 flexible grouping and setting ensures that all pupils including those with learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented work at the right level. Enrichment activities are outstanding. Frosterley's links with a school in Shanghai are exceptionally exciting. Visits from Chinese teachers, e-mail links and a planned visit for older children to go to China with their parents and teachers is providing these pupils with a unique opportunity to learn about another culture very different from their own.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in their personal and academic development because of the very good care the school provides for them. Effective procedures are in place to safeguard children's welfare, health and safety. The governors are working with the whole

community to develop a travel plan which will keep pupils safe as they travel to and from home. Pupils who are vulnerable receive very high levels of care and support from experienced teachers and assistants which helps them become confident and successful learners. In association with the nearby nursery, the school provides before and after school care as well as a breakfast club. In some classes pupils are provided with very clear targets on how they can improve their work but this is not yet embedded in all subjects or in all year groups. As a result pupils do not always have sufficient information to help them know what they need to do to move on to the next stage in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and governing body lead and manage the school well. Together they work with a very good team of staff, the local community and a range of other partners to provide pupils with an exciting and stimulating learning environment which ensures that all pupils achieve well in their personal and academic development. The headteacher's heavy teaching commitment does not provide sufficient time to ensure that systems such as the high quality assessment arrangements in English are used in all subjects or all classes. Set alongside this, the headteacher has been proactive in meeting the needs of a changing school population. The school's organisation, resources and staffing have been adapted very well in response to the rise in school numbers, high levels of mobility and the increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties an/or disabilities. Central to the school's success in meeting these needs is the effective way the school works with a range of partners which include local businesses, neighbouring schools and the British Council. The school's international links are exceptional and are providing pupils with the personal and social skills to be responsible world citizens in the twenty first century.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

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? | 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| 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

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| 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

Frosterley Community School

Bridge End

Frosterley

Weardale

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL13 2SN

7 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for being so friendly and welcoming when I visited your school a short while ago.

You are all successful and enthusiastic learners who work hard and behave well.

You are all very proud of the school council and so you should be. In fact they are so good that they are helping another school to set up their own school council. They have managed to get some new equipment for you to use at lunchtime so that you don't become bored and a little bit over excited.

- I was also pleased to hear that you and your parents are helping to make lunches healthier and that everyone in the village, including your parents and teachers, is looking at how to make your journey to school a safer one. The work you are doing to help design and make new habitats in the Frosterley Quarry sounds so interesting and such a useful project to make your village a better place to be.

One of the most exciting things going on in your school is the link you have with a school in China. This is making you such sensible and tolerant children who understand how important it is to learn about other ways of life. Some of you must be so excited about travelling all the way to China to meet the children you have been emailing.

There are just a couple of things I have asked your teachers to do to make the school even better:

- to tell you how you can improve your work in mathematics and science in the same way as they do in English
- to provide some better play equipment for the children in the reception class.

I think you are very lucky to go to such a good school where your headteacher and teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and help you learn such a lot. I hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Carole Cressey

Lead inspector