



# Guide Post Ringway First School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122247  
**Local Authority** Northumberland  
**Inspection number** 292352  
**Inspection dates** 8–9 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Andrew Scott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Ringway
<b>School category</b>	Community		Guide Post, Choppington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		Northumberland, NE62 5YP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 813463
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	109	<b>Fax number</b>	01670 813463
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Joe Patterson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hazel Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2002		

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<b>Age group</b> 4–9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 8–9 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 292352
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small first school serves part of a large village where socio-economic conditions are broadly average. Pupils numbers have fallen in recent years but rose in 2006. Movement within the pupil population is lower than average. Virtually all pupils are from White British families and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is quite low at present but varies considerably; it was average last year. Attainment on entry to the school is usually average but also fluctuates from year-to-year.

## 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 warm, family atmosphere that pervades the school ensures mutual respect between staff and pupils, and a keen spirit of co-operation among pupils. Pupils' personal development is good: pupils are responsible, look after one another sensibly and behave extremely well. They feel secure because staff know them well and safeguarding systems are in place. Pupils are increasingly adopting a healthy lifestyle, especially through exercise. They play a central role in the school's development and contribute well to the local community.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is effective. Good provision in the Reception year means that children currently exceed the goals expected of five year olds. By Year 2, standards are usually average or above, depending on the year group. Pupils are not quite as good at writing as they are at reading and mathematics. By Year 4, pupils' attainment also varies. In 2006, for example, it was below county averages in reading and mathematics, mainly because of a very high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties. Currently, pupils are making good progress towards much higher targets although, as with younger pupils, writing is not as well developed as other skills.

Teachers plan lessons well, present new information clearly to pupils and use resources shrewdly to reinforce new learning. Consequently, pupils understand readily. Teachers use assessment well to set work that matches pupils' abilities, but do not allow enough for the different ways in which pupils learn. However, pupils enjoy their work and have positive attitudes to learning, helped by the celebration of their work through skilful displays and special assemblies. New systems of setting learning targets for pupils are comprehensive and beneficial. The good curriculum rightly champions basic skills and is enriched by an array of interesting extra activities.

The headteacher's good leadership is improving achievement and strengthening staff skills. It has also made the building and grounds better and more stimulating places to be. This is appreciated by parents who hold the school in high esteem. The school has clear direction and suitable priorities. However, at present, subject leaders and governors are not involved enough in developing the school, especially in monitoring its provision. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory but is not rigorous and insightful enough. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection but the recent improvements show that the school has good capacity to improve. It offers good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing.
- Ensure that teachers' planning allows sufficiently for the different learning styles of pupils to improve their progress.
- Improve the quality of self-evaluation, especially by subject leaders and governors, so that development planning can be more precise.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year but is generally average. Children progress well and, by the end of their first year, exceed levels expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning.

Standards by the end of Year 2 fluctuate slightly over time, but have been reasonably consistent even though data on small year groups may not be entirely reliable. Standards have been average or above in recent years, and were average in 2006; reading and mathematics were slightly stronger than writing. School records suggest that pupils are making good progress in the current Year 2.

Attainment by Year 4 is also variable but, in 2006, it was below expected levels in reading and mathematics; writing was average. This year group had an unusually high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties – almost half the class. Pupils in the current Year 4 are making good progress towards the school's predictions of above average levels in reading and mathematics. Although girls sometimes outperform boys, notably in English, there is no consistent pattern of disparity between boys and girls.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, are eager to learn and respond well, sometimes extremely well, in lessons. Their attendance is satisfactory and improving, because of concerted efforts by the school. Pupils are polite and very supportive of one another. Their close co-operation in and out of class and their excellent behaviour explain why life in school is safe and harmonious.

Pupils clearly understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and their own responsibility for it. They know the value of a sensible diet. One pupil proudly said, 'I have an apple and a banana every day for breakfast.' Pupils contribute to the wider community through various means – fundraising, carol-singing and planting trees in the locality. The school council has raised money and selected exercise equipment for outside play.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are given ample time to reflect on issues and learn about different lifestyles, for example, through art and geography. Pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural dimension of modern British society is satisfactory. All in all pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Classrooms are positive places, where pupils listen well and work hard because teachers have good expectations of their involvement. Teachers present new learning clearly, sometimes very skilfully, so that pupils understand the ideas and take on subsequent tasks confidently. Pupils are self-reliant and do not need much supervision, but learn better when adult support for groups is available.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and efficiently. As a result, they are able to plan work that matches the abilities of pupils, for the most part. Pupils appreciate the advice they receive in lessons from teachers about how to improve their work but similar support is not so evident in teachers' marking.

Teachers increasingly devise lessons that excite pupils' interest although, on occasions, the completion of worksheets dilutes the fun element. Sometimes, teachers expect all pupils to do similar, routine work which does not allow for the different ways in which pupils learn and does not sufficiently promote creativity of thought.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It rightly focuses on the key subjects, but not at the expense of others. Increasingly, teachers are using different subjects to develop pupils' basic skills and this produces some high quality work. The skilled Year 4 artwork on rainforests, for example, part of an environmental study, typified the artwork throughout the school. Pupils use good computer skills to research information on the internet. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of clubs, visits, visitors and other activities, including maypole dancing.

Teachers ensure that all pupils are involved equally in lessons. For example, pupils with learning difficulties follow the same curriculum but receive extra help. Children in the Reception class benefit from good provision, because they are encouraged to become independent through individual and group investigation. Pupils' personal and health education is promoted well.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Pupils say they feel secure and that all adults are approachable and understanding. Teachers know pupils' personal circumstances very well and so respond sensitively to individual pastoral needs. Systems for safeguarding pupils, such as child protection, first-aid and risk assessments, are in place. The school is vigilant in checking the suitability of adults who work with the pupils.

The recently introduced systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress are detailed and informative. They help teachers to identify whether individual pupils' progress is good enough and enable teachers to set challenging but achievable targets that pupils understand. As this process is quite new, it is difficult to assess the outcomes yet, but the signs are promising.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher is a firm, fair and enthusiastic leader, rightly focused on both the academic and personal development of the pupils. She is keen to bolster the existing strengths of the school with current educational ideas. Extra training has helped subject leaders ensure that their subjects are kept up-to-date. The management of the school is satisfactory, with some good features. The school carries out regular monitoring and knows where its strengths and weaknesses lie. However, the school does not expand on shortcomings sufficiently in detailed action plans, and subject leaders and governors are not yet fully active in the evaluation process. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, have good access to all its educational provision. The whole of the school's resources in staffing, equipment and accommodation are used well to ensure that the quality of education is good.

Governance is satisfactory and improving. Many of the governors are quite new and, therefore, not yet into their stride. Nevertheless, they are eager to support the school and increasingly aware of their role. Parents are very positive about the school. A very small minority of parents has concerns about the school's communication with them, but the inspection found this to be good. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. There was a decline in standards for a time but the situation has improved. Since her arrival, the headteacher has instigated improvements to the school environment and the maintenance of the building. She has also introduced new systems to improve learning and strengthened staff skills. The school is now in good shape to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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	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

Guide Post Ringway First School

Ringway

Guide Post

Choppington

Northumberland

NE62 5YP

9 March 2007

Dear children,

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and your comments have greatly helped me to get to know your school. I know you think you have a good school. So do I!

I particularly liked the atmosphere of the school, which you have helped to create. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well together, regardless of any differences in age, like one big happy family. You really enjoy your work and I was impressed by the way you can work on your own, even in the Reception class. You are good at helping the school to improve and at supporting your local community.

You achieve well in your work, because your teachers are good and you have lots of extra activities. Teachers usually make learning interesting and always expect you to do your best. To help to make all of your learning interesting, I have asked your teachers to always give you the kind of work that suits you individually. You do well in your reading and mathematics, as well as ICT and art. I thought the displays of your work were great. You are not quite so successful in your writing and I have agreed with the school that this should be improved. I hope you will want to help by concentrating on your targets.

Your headteacher has lots of ideas to make your school better and I have asked all staff and governors to work hard to make this happen. I know you appreciate the clean, bright building. I especially liked the environmental garden and playtime resources that you have helped to provide.

I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Scott

School Inspector