



Longhorsley St Helen's Church of England Aided First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122283
Local Authority Northumberland
Inspection number 292358
Inspection date 22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Drummonds Close
School category	Voluntary aided		Longhorsley, Morpeth
Age range of pupils	3–9		Northumberland, NE65 8UT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01670 788316
Number on roll (school)	96	Fax number	01670 788031
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Truscott
		Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Hinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Longhorsley is a small school in rural Northumberland. It is part of a federation with two other small first schools and the headteacher is shared with one of the schools. Longhorsley has achieved awards in basic skills, Investors in People and for being a healthy school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. All the pupils have English as their first language and nearly all come from White British backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Longhorsley is a very good school. It is the centre of many local community activities and enjoys high levels of support and confidence from parents and the community. Staff and governors successfully evaluate the school's performance and there is a strong track record of continuous improvement. The high quality of care and personal development is an outstanding feature. Pupils feel safe, are eager to learn, and behave exceptionally well.

From an average starting point, pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics, and science. The very good quality of teaching results in pupils having a real thirst for learning. Results in the 2005 national tests were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school knows aesthetic and creative subjects do not reach the same high standards and is taking the right action to make improvements.

The school accurately judges leadership and management to be good. Leadership by the headteacher and the governors is very effective, and there is a clear and exciting vision driving the school forward as part of the federation of schools. When the good achievement of pupils is matched against income the school provides, value for money is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure achievement and standards in aesthetic and creative subjects are at the same high level found in English, mathematics, and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is average. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. Results in the 2005 national tests were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics with boys and girls doing equally well. The number of pupils who reached Level 2 in the tests was well above average. In 2006, Year 4 writing was above average at Levels 3 and 4 and mathematics results exceeded predictions.

Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics are significantly above average by the time pupils leave the school. The school acknowledges achievement and standards in aesthetic and creative subjects are not as good as they want them to be. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and make very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they respond very well to the warm and friendly atmosphere. They are very keen to learn and take great pride in their work. They readily take on responsibilities, for example as members of the school council and as 'buddies' to help other pupils. Choosing an item from the 'imagination box', an idea suggested by a pupil, is a favourite activity at playtime.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are excellent. There are strong links between the different faiths and churches in the community. A young pupil said she liked to pray in the church in the role play area when no one else was there. Pupils are involved in fundraising activities for charities and demonstrate a high level of cooperation and teamwork. Pupils have a very good awareness of healthy living and enjoy their school meals. Their self-esteem is very high because initiatives such as the 'VIP book' and 'marble rewards' ensure that they confidently take part in all school activities. Attitudes are excellent and they show a great deal of respect and support for one another.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and, at times, outstanding. For example, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding in the Foundation Stage and mathematics lessons in Years 3 and 4 largely because of the way staff challenge pupils to think at every possible moment and the great emphasis placed on the development of speaking and listening skills. Pupils learn quickly throughout the school because the teachers know the children very well and the needs of each child are understood by all the adults working in the school.

Experienced and skilled classroom assistants work very effectively supporting the learning of individual pupils and groups. Teachers plan the work to ensure that the different age groups and abilities are catered for very well. Pupils feel comfortable asking adults for help with their work. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this creates a very positive atmosphere for learning. There are some very good examples of feedback where pupils are encouraged to improve further, and this is being shared across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very well planned and provision to develop basic skills is very good. The school is in the process of revising the curriculum to introduce more creativity into subject work led by the 'creative partnership' programme. Music and drama are

now taught within other subjects such as religious education (RE). The Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent and covers all the required areas of learning. Planning combines class work, small group and individual learning very well.

The school places great emphasis on providing first hand experiences for pupils and learning is enriched by visits, visitors and special events, which pupils greatly enjoy. Matching the curriculum to the needs of individual pupils is a high priority. Good use is made of specialist teachers in RE, physical education, music and French. Pupils and parents indicate that they would like more extra- curricular activities to be provided.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care and support for children are excellent. Staff provide a very safe and secure environment for pupils. Children acknowledge this and say they feel comfortable asking adults for help when they need it. Pupils say they really enjoy school and that there is no bullying. They know what to do if they are bullied and place high importance on supporting each other.

Child protection procedures are very thorough and all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. Very good use is made of outside agencies to provide support of high quality to help the school fully meet the range of pupils' needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given outstanding personal, emotional and academic support. The progress of all pupils is closely monitored and target-setting arrangements are a strength. Pupils know their individual targets and when they have achieved them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school accurately judges leadership and management to be good. Leadership by the headteacher, assistant headteacher and the governors is very effective and there is a clear and exciting vision for the school as part of the federation. Everyone at the school is focused on maintaining and improving high standards and providing a high quality of education. Effective systems to evaluate and improve the school's performance are now in place and work is regularly monitored by staff and governors. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and the absence of any form of discrimination helps pupils to do as well as they can. Parents and pupils are consulted and the right actions are taken as a result of their views.

Governance of the school is very good because governors rigorously hold the school to account and legal requirements are met. Value for money is good, particularly when the progress of pupils is matched against income. There is a strong track record of continuous improvement, which is driving the school in the right direction.

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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	1
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	2
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	1
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?	1

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	1
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	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

Longhorsley St Helen's Church of England Aided First School

Drummonds Close

Longhorsley

Morpeth

Northumberland

NE65 8UT

23 November 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for all your help when I inspected your school with my colleague on 22 November. We particularly enjoyed hearing your views and listening to you talk about the work you were doing. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account.

I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- You go to a very good school.
- Your results in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Your personal development and the support you receive are excellent.
- The quality of teaching and learning is high and staff help you to be safe.
- Your headteacher and the governors are leading and managing the school very well.

Your teachers work very hard and want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they could:

- try to make sure that achievement and standards in creative subjects are at the same high level found in English, mathematics, and science.

Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector