



Humshaugh Church of England First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122295
Local Authority Northumberland
Inspection number 292361
Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Linda Buller

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

Type of school	First	School address	Humshaugh
School category	Voluntary aided		Hexham, Northumberland
Age range of pupils	4–9		NE46 4AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01434 681408
Number on roll (school)	26	Fax number	01434 681408
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Penny Steele
		Headteacher	Mrs Angela Steele
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–9	25–26 January 2007	292361

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small school serves the village of Humshaugh and surrounding area. Socio-economic conditions are above average and few pupils are eligible for free school meals. All pupils are from White British families. The attainment of children joining the school in the Reception Class is above that typical for children of their age. In some year groups, however, there are significant proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The school is friendly and welcoming and successfully places a high priority on ensuring pupils' well-being. The school works very well with other agencies. This is particularly successful in the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and helps them to make good progress towards their targets.

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils attain standards that are generally above the average. This provides pupils with a good platform for their future success. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and the children make reasonable progress although the curriculum for this stage has some weaknesses. Many of the activities are adapted from the curriculum planned for Key Stage 1 and do not provide these young children with enough freedom to make independent choices or to learn through play.

Pupils enjoy school, behave sensibly and form positive relationships. They feel safe and their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is developing well. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community and gain much in return. Children settle well when they start the Reception year. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils and their parents are right to be pleased with the good quality of personal care provided.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In lessons, teachers explain tasks clearly so that pupils readily understand what they are expected to do. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy an interesting range of activities planned to enhance their learning. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning and the level of work set are not always sufficiently demanding, particularly for more able pupils. This is the main reason why achievement is satisfactory and not good.

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that the school knows its own strengths well and what needs to be improved. This information has been used well to set clear priorities; for example, to improve standards in writing. However, some weaknesses in provision in the Foundation Stage have not yet been addressed and the monitoring of teaching has not always been successful in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are consistently met. Nevertheless, the school has maintained above average standards since the time of the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that the work set for pupils, particularly the most able, is at the right level for them.
- Take action to improve the weaknesses identified by the school's management.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average. Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points in Reception and most of them exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Until 2006, the results of national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were above the national average. In 2006, the results fell because 50% of the pupils who took the tests had learning difficulties. All pupils attained the targets set for them. The school currently has no pupils in Year 2. Reception and Year 1 pupils are mainly taught together in one class and are working at levels above those expected of them. Nevertheless, the work set for pupils is not always at the right level for them and this is why their progress is no better than satisfactory. By contrast, the pupils with learning difficulties make good progress owing to consistently good provision and support.

School records and inspection evidence indicate that progress in Key Stage 2 is improving. As a result, Year 4 pupils' attainment is consistently above what would be expected of children of this age and there is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils confirm that they enjoy coming to school; however, levels of attendance have been declining although they are still in line with the national average. School records show that although this decline is in part attributable to illness, mostly it is because a number of pupils take holidays in term time. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to pupils' good behaviour. Pupils have a very good understanding of the Christian faith and their cultural development is good; for example, through their work in music and history. Their awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain, however, is limited. As a result of good provision for personal development, pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet, exercise and how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils maturely discuss how to use this information to make informed decisions regarding their own lifestyles. Preparation for future economic well-being is good, because of good academic and social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teachers' knowledge of their pupils and good relationships are very positive features of life in this school. Pupils look forward to their lessons. They feel positive about learning because they get on

well with the adults in the classroom. This contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Teachers usually ensure that the aims of the lesson are clear and provide effective feedback on its success to the pupils. Teachers mark the pupils' work well so that pupils understand how to improve. Teaching is not better than satisfactory, and leads to only satisfactory achievement, because the level of work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities. This is particularly the case in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers are committed to improving the learning skills of pupils with learning difficulties and, as a result, these pupils gain in confidence and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It includes a good range of experiences, which motivates pupils and gives them a real purpose to their learning. For example, a recent strong emphasis on improving writing has seen the curriculum enriched by a visit to a monastery. This visit captured pupils' interest and, as a result, their writing came alive, showing a good range of vocabulary. Pupils' health and social development benefit from a wide range of sporting and other after-school clubs. There are weaknesses, however, in the curriculum planned for children in the Foundation Stage. These children mostly follow the curriculum planned for pupils in Key Stage 1. Although activities are adapted for children of their age, there are too few opportunities for Reception children to find things out for themselves or develop independence through structured play.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Good care is taken to ensure that pupils know who to turn to if they need help with a problem or to resolve a disagreement, and this makes them confident and happy. Procedures for health, safety and for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Good links with pre-school provision ensure that children settle quickly into school routines. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Effective links with other agencies contribute to good support and guidance. This, together with effective deployment of teaching assistants, ensures that these pupils have all the help they need to enable them to play a full part in lessons and make good progress. The school has recently put in place an effective system for tracking pupils' progress although its use in ensuring pupils receive appropriate support and guidance is currently more effective in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The impact of the leadership and management on pupils' progress and personal development is satisfactory. Since her appointment in 2005, the headteacher has carried out a thorough audit of the school's provision. As a result, she has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Good analysis of test results has led to

successful initiatives to improve standards in writing. Monitoring of teaching has contributed well to the self-evaluation process, which is good. Weaknesses in provision in the Foundation Stage have been identified although action to eliminate them has yet to be taken. Governance is satisfactory; the governors are supportive and are involved well in the day-to-day life of the school and in monitoring its performance. Although they correctly identify the school's above average standards, they have an over-generous view of achievement and the impact of this on the school's provision of teaching and the curriculum.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Humshaugh Church of England First School

Humshaugh

Hexham

Northumberland

NE46 4AA

25 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. I enjoyed meeting you and the staff. Our discussions helped me to get to know your school in a short time.

It was good to hear that you enjoy school and that the staff look after you well so that you feel safe and secure. Teachers work hard to plan your lessons and most of the time they make them interesting. I know you appreciate their advice when they mark your work and this helps you to know how to improve.

I think that the children in the Reception class should have special work just for them so that they can be independent and learn by playing. I also think that the school should make sure that your work is always hard enough so that you can all achieve even better results. You can help with this by attending school regularly and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector