

# South Wellfield First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108588
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	309734
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Potter

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Ridley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Julie Gordon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Otterburn Avenue South Wellfield Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 9QL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2008809
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2008604

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of above average size for its type and most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need are also below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

South Wellfield is a good school where pupils make good progress because teaching is good and pupils are safe and happy. The school cares deeply for its pupils, giving them good care and support. Parents hold it in high regard and appreciate the way their children are helped to feel secure and enjoy their learning. From starting points broadly typical for their age, pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and continue to achieve well as they move through the school. Standards in 2007 for Year 2 pupils were well above average in mathematics, reading and writing, as they have tended to be in recent years. Significantly more pupils reached the higher levels in these subjects than nationally. Assessments for Year 4 pupils show that overall standards are exceptionally high although, in 2007, pupils made less progress than might have been expected in mathematics. The school has introduced well-targeted strategies to tackle this.

Good relationships and sensitive support from a caring staff strongly promote pupils' good personal development. Pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Attendance is good. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They readily take on responsibilities; older pupils look after younger ones and contribute well to developments in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit, as the school puts good emphasis on these aspects of provision. The school's focus on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, along with pupils' confidence in working with partners, prepares them well for their future lives and education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers try to ensure that work is interesting and that pupils make good progress. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to allow pupils to work independently or to discuss ideas in groups. Teachers increasingly use assessment information to set pupils targets for improvement, and to tailor lessons to pupils' individual needs. However, there is sometimes a lack of challenge, especially for the most able pupils. The good curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by a good range of well planned and stimulating enrichment activities. There is an impressive range of popular after school clubs and activities.

Leadership and management are good. There is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and specific detail in planning to show how initiatives will be implemented. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's progress and her model of shared leadership is encouraging others to develop their leadership roles. However, monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure that initiatives are being consistently applied or having a full impact on improving progress. The governing body has made a good contribution to the school's development by providing high levels of challenge and support. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, especially in assessment and the development of information and communication technology (ICT). The school has a good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children's skills and understanding on entry to the Nursery are broadly typical for their age, with the lowest skills being in calculation, speaking and listening. As a result of carefully planned induction procedures and stimulating learning

activities, children settle in quickly and make good progress in their learning. By the time children enter Year 1, the majority have reached levels above what is expected for their age in all areas except their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Children are well nurtured and cared for in a safe and stimulating environment. The curriculum is well planned with a good range of exciting activities that support new learning both indoors and outdoors. However, not enough opportunities are provided to allow children to choose activities for themselves. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and adults plan well together as a team. Effective planning is based on good understanding of how young children learn best and the meticulous assessment of children's skills and abilities. All adults working in the Foundation Stage make a good impact on children's learning. As a result, children develop increasing levels of knowledge and skills, and become more confident and independent. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and support provided.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that managers at all levels monitor the school's development more effectively.
- Provide more scope for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.
- Ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Since the last inspection in 2004, the trend has been of standards that have been significantly above average at the end of Key Stage 1, exceptionally so in 2004 and 2005. This reflects the good progress that the pupils make in Years 1 and 2. The school's results in the 2007 national assessments for Year 2 pupils overall were well above average, especially in the higher levels for reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in Years 3 and 4 continues to be good and pupils maintain significantly high overall standards at the end of Year 4, especially so in reading. However, the school correctly recognises that progress in mathematics, although good, is less rapid than in reading and writing. A number of well targeted measures have been established to tackle this concern. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as good progress as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, and social development, are good. Pupils have a good understanding of the cultural diversity within Britain today and of their local heritage. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school, although pupils say that occasionally their lessons are disrupted by a small minority of other pupils. They enjoy coming to school, work hard and are friendly and polite. They say that they feel safe and secure and bullying is rare. Pupils know how to stay healthy; they eat healthy lunches and appreciate the opportunities to take exercise. Attendance is good and the majority of pupils attend regularly and punctually. There are good opportunities to contribute to the school family and beyond. Pupils have a good awareness of the local community and the needs of others. They show this care by regularly raising funds to help others. Older pupils look after younger ones and are keen to take on responsibilities, especially in discussing and planning school projects, such as improving the playground. The school council gives pupils a voice but they say they would like

it to have more influence. Good enterprise activities and the development of the ability to work co-operatively in groups help prepare pupils well for the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and enable all pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teachers' good subject knowledge leads to careful planning and structuring of lessons to provide a range of learning activities to motivate pupils. Pupils benefit from assessing one another's work and discussing their ideas together with talk partners. Questioning is often used well to check pupils' understanding and to increase their confidence in speaking and listening and explaining their responses. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss their ideas in groups so that they can develop their speaking and listening skills in discussion. There is good use of interactive whiteboard technology to support pupils' learning. Marking of pupils' work is supportive and increasingly informs pupils about how to improve their work. Pupils generally behave well, have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy learning. Less successful lessons sometimes lack pace and challenge to meet the different needs of all pupils. Some lessons are too teacher-directed and so limit opportunities for independent work. The school is good at meeting the needs of pupils who have difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants offer good support for such pupils and this extends to assisting all pupils in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and takes account of national initiatives and guidance. There is a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils have ample opportunities for exercise through physical education lessons and after school activities. Personal development is well supported and promoted, especially through social, health and citizenship education and the social and emotional aspects of learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' creativity, especially in music, design technology and art, and the school is beginning to place an emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills. Teachers help pupils to see the links between subjects. French is taught to all pupils in Years 1 to 4. Pupils' personal and academic development is well supported by an impressive range of enrichment activities, including a wide range of popular extra-curricular opportunities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. These begin when children are welcomed into Nursery and continue throughout the pupils' time in school, so that they are happy, enjoy their learning and are well prepared for their future education. All members of staff know the pupils extremely well and are aware of their needs and how to meet them. Support for vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is both sensitive and effective. There are strong and effective relationships with the outside agencies who work with the school. The health and safety of all children are paramount and all necessary child protection and safeguarding requirements are in place. Close social and academic links with the local middle schools ensure pupils have a smooth move to their new school. Procedures for tracking pupils'

academic development are in place and are being used increasingly to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the recently developed senior leadership team, has a clear view of the school. The school uses data effectively to identify areas for improvement, for example in mathematics. Self-evaluation is therefore accurate and is reflected in a school improvement plan with appropriate areas for development and detailed planning about how its priorities will be achieved. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and the implementation of initiatives designed to raise standards. However, this monitoring is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that these initiatives are being consistently applied or having the necessary impact on consistent improvement in pupils' achievement. The school sets and achieves challenging targets for most pupils although, despite their excellent results in national tests, the most able pupils are not always fully challenged in lessons. Governance is good. The committed and innovative governing body provide good support and challenge. A very large majority of parents support the work of the school and appreciate what it does for their children. The school has acted upon the issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection, especially with regard to assessment and the development of ICT.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

3 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Wellfield First School, Whitley Bay, NE25 9QL

Thank you so much for making Mrs Cochrane, Mrs Dutton and me welcome when we visited your school.

We believe South Wellfield First School is a good school. The staff care for you very well and try to make your lessons interesting. As a result, you achieve excellent results in your tests and assessments. We were pleased to see that you work hard and try to do your best. You come to school regularly and on time, and most of you behave well in lessons and in the playground. In fact, we think that your behaviour is good. We found that you are very polite and helpful; we enjoyed talking to you about your school.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school and that you like your teachers. You said you appreciate the activities the school provides for you like the visits to museums and places of worship. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way your teachers care for you and help you to do well in lessons.

In order to help the school to continue to improve we have asked your teachers to check that you are all benefiting from the many things they are trying to do to improve your learning. We have also asked them to provide you with work that will challenge you even more and allow you to work more independently and actively, as well as giving you more time to discuss your work and your ideas with your friends.

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

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector