

New Hartley First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122224
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	314239
Inspection dates	20–21 November 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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Nigel Goode (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Wright
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	New Hartley Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 0RD
Telephone number	0191 2371218
Fax number	0191 2371218

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most other first schools. It is in an area that is average in terms of social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is much lower than the national average as is the number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are White British with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. On entry to Nursery, children's attainment overall is just below that which is typical of children of their age.

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 that enables pupils to achieve well and thrive personally. They are well prepared for the future because they get a good grounding in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics and their personal development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most parents hold the school in high regard. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and they are well cared for. Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in above average levels of attendance, good attitudes to learning and a high rate of productivity in most lessons.

Achievement is good because pupils are well taught for much of their time in school. Foundation Stage children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make appreciable gains in their learning and by Year 2 reach above average standards. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, teaching quality is consistently good especially in the way teachers use their good subject knowledge to ensure that pupils achieve well in the acquisition of good phonic knowledge. This in turn leads to above average standards in reading and writing skills for Year 2 pupils. By Year 4 standards are maintained above those expected nationally and pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Progress is not as rapid in this key stage because not all pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils, are challenged to reach the standards of which they are capable. Expectations of their performance are not always high enough.

The curriculum provided for pupils is good overall. Recent improvements have broadened pupils' experiences and this is having a good impact on pupils' personal development. As a result, older pupils are developing a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, particularly the importance of regular exercise, although this knowledge is not always translated into the choices they make with regard to healthy eating. Pupils readily take on responsibility; for example, school councillors are very enthusiastic to discuss the role they have played in improving their play space. Through this initiative, all pupils have improved their understanding of how to stay safe and the importance of considering the needs of others. Curriculum planning does not always ensure that pupils' work builds well enough on what they all ready know or can do.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is leading the school well in the delivery of its priorities to enable pupils to leave the school with the skills needed to become effective future citizens. Self-evaluation is, in the main, accurate although judgements are at times a little over-optimistic. The school has systems to check regularly how well pupils are doing. The information gathered is used well to set challenging targets for most pupils, but less so for Year 3 and 4 pupils. Nevertheless, standards above the national average have been maintained, teaching and the curriculum are good and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and enables children to make a good start to school. Children make rapid progress because they are happy at school and effective teaching helps them to learn quickly. A strong emphasis is placed on activities that teach children early literacy and numeracy skills as these are weaker areas of development when they begin in Nursery. The result is that most children are working at or beyond the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning when they start in Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2, especially the more able, by setting more challenging targets for pupils and raising teachers' expectations of their performance.
- Ensure that the curriculum planned for pupils in Key Stage 2 builds successfully on what pupils already know and can do.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards are just below expectations when pupils start school. They make good progress and reach standards that are above expectations at the end of Year 4. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with many already reaching standards above those which are expected for their age. This good rate of progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Standards for Year 2 pupils have been consistently above average since the last inspection. The results of the 2007 national assessments show that these standards have been maintained, despite a high proportion of these pupils having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils are supported well and make good progress.

The results of tests conducted by the school for Year 4 pupils show that standards are also above those typical for their age. The school's analysis of the 2007 results shows that most pupils have met their targets. However, targets are not always challenging enough and some, particularly higher attaining pupils, are capable of achieving more.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are good because they learn in an atmosphere in which they feel valued and encouraged. Their sense of self-worth and confidence in their own abilities develops progressively and their good behaviour contributes to a strong sense of community. Consequently, pupils feel safe. They enjoy the many and extended range of physical activities the school provides and recognise the importance of this to their health and well-being. Pupils' understanding of what constitutes healthy eating is also developing, but this is not yet always reflected in the choices which they make. Pupils are rightly proud of the part they play in creating a school community where relationships are good and where their thoughts and ideas are valued. When asked who it was who took care of them if they were hurt, one pupil replied, 'everyone around here looks after each other'. Given these attitudes and the good progress they make in acquiring basic skills pupils are well prepared for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and create a calm and productive atmosphere for learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use this well to promote pupils' thinking and to probe understanding through effective questioning. Clear explanations ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they are required to learn in each lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and pupils are mostly clear about what they need to do to improve. For younger children this is particularly effective when

they are encouraged to judge for themselves the quality of their work, and guidance for improvement is provided promptly. Occasionally, guidance is not clear enough in mathematics. Teachers create welcoming classrooms and engage pupils by planning interesting lessons that take account of the fact the pupils have a range of different needs and abilities. However, as the individual targets set for many pupils in Key Stage 2 often lack challenge, teachers' expectations of what pupils are expected to do in lessons are not always high enough. This is particularly the case for more able pupils, but not exclusively so, and is one of the reasons why progress is not as rapid in this key stage.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall because it provides well for the early development of good basic literacy and numeracy skills. Good enrichment activities effectively contribute to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school. Educational visits and visitors to school help pupils to appreciate the wider world and its diverse cultures. This approach enlivens pupils' learning and helps them to see it is relevant to their future lives. Younger pupils benefit from a curriculum that is well focused to meet their needs. As a result, by the time they enter Key Stage 2, a significant number are already working at levels beyond those expected for their age. They are confident learners and very keen to do their best. The planned curriculum for Key Stage 2 does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to build upon their already well developed skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. The day-to-day care of pupils by staff is good. The arrangements made for safeguarding pupils meet government guidelines. Pupils benefit from a good level of personal support and the school is quick to seek advice and support from external agencies for those who experience difficulty with their learning or behaviour. There are examples of effective support and guidance being provided to help pupils to make good progress in their work but these are not yet consistent across the school. For example, although pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, the targets set for their learning are not always precise or challenging enough, especially for more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It is popular with parents, and pupils are proud of their school. Procedures to ensure pupils well-being and safety are in place. However, although governance is satisfactory, their monitoring role is underdeveloped. Since his recent appointment, the headteacher has set a clear direction for the school with an aim to provide a rounded and effective education for pupils. Actions taken to broaden pupils' curricular experiences and to develop more effective partnerships with parents are beginning to bear fruit. Pupils now have extended opportunities to participate in a range of sports and standards in physical education are rising as a result.

Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 are thoroughly analysed and the information is used to set future targets. Although the school has been consistently successful in meeting these targets, they are not always challenging enough for pupils in Key Stage 2. Leaders and

managers at all levels are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility through a range of monitoring activities. This has ensured that teaching remains good overall and that pupils continue to achieve well over time. The school has a broadly accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses, but its judgements regarding the effectiveness of some areas of its work are a little over-optimistic. The school has done well to maintain above average standards since the last inspection and has demonstrated a good capacity to improve further.

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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 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
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

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Hartley First School, Northumberland, NE25 0RD

Thank you very much for all your help when I visited your school. You go to a good school where you do well. This is because the teaching is good at helping you to read and write, often to a better standard than many other children of your age. I was very impressed by your good manners and how well you get on with one another. You told me that you enjoy coming to school and it was great to hear that there is always someone there to help if you are hurt or upset. It is good that you understand that taking regular exercise will help you to stay fit and healthy. You could do even better with this if you continue to improve the choices you make about what foods you eat.

Most of you get lots of work done but some of the older children find the work they do in Years 3 and 4 too easy. I have therefore asked the school to make sure they give you targets to work towards that really challenge you to do as well as you can, and that the work you are given builds on what you are ready know, understand and can do.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector