

Scremerston First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122248
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	314249
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr George Dance
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Scremerston Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2RB
Telephone number	01289 307 536
Fax number	000000

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves a fairly wide rural area. All pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Overall, children's skills when they join the school are broadly typical for their age group, though this can vary significantly each year because of the small numbers.

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 where pupils' achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 4 most leave the school with attainment that is above the level expected for their ages, especially in reading. This is because teaching is of good quality and pupils of all abilities are well supported to meet the challenging targets that are set for them. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from their starting points and most achieve the goals set for their learning by the end of Reception.

Pupils' personal development is good because they are well supported by caring staff who know them well. They develop excellent relationships based on tolerance and respect because of the example they are set by staff. Pupils contribute very well to the smooth running and improvement of the school through their school council. They make an excellent contribution to the community as good citizens of the future who know how to care for themselves, stay healthy and care for the world's resources. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning with good basic skills and good personal qualities.

The very effective teaching based on thorough knowledge of pupils' needs ensures that pupils succeed in lessons and develop good levels of self-confidence and independence. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own learning so that pupils have a clear idea of how to improve. A rich well planned curriculum which extends pupils' interests and understanding of the world underpins the good teaching and fires pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Good quality care and guidance ensure that all pupils are safe and well looked after and are supported to make good progress.

The school is well led and managed. All staff and governors follow the very good lead given by the headteacher for raising standards. All contribute to the school's very secure self-evaluation and improvement. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially to standards, indicating that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress overall during their time in the Reception class. By the end of the Foundation Stage most reach the expected level in all areas of their learning and each year a few exceed this. Usually children make the best progress in reading and mathematical development. Limited accommodation restricts children's access to a full range of learning activities throughout the morning and this limits their opportunity to make choices, develop independence and collaborative skills and become confident about their own learning. Afternoon arrangements provide better scope for children to learn through play but the opportunity to exercise choice is still limited. School data confirm that children's social and emotional development and their speaking skills are less well developed than other areas of their learning. This is because there is not enough focus on the development of these aspects throughout all of the children's learning experiences.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to make choices, develop independence and learn to work with each other throughout the school day.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. Children join the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. They make steady progress and most reach the goals set for their learning by the end of the year. In the school's national tests in 2006, Year 2 pupils reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This year's results paint a similar picture. The school's results in national tests have been above average for the last three years, confirming that pupils learn well whatever their starting points. Good progress continues in Years 3 and 4 so that by the end of Year 4 many pupils exceed the level expected for their age, especially in reading. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection as a result of the successful actions the school has taken to make improvements. A good proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in the school's 2007 tests and assessments at Year 2 and Year 4. The school's data and inspection evidence confirm that pupils meet and often exceed the challenging targets that are set for them. Pupils reach good standards in other subjects too, most notably in art and design, displays of which enhance the school inside and out.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils form excellent relationships with each other. Older pupils are well aware of the need to care for younger pupils and they do so naturally, following the example set by their teachers. This is seen at breaks and lunchtime, where pupils of all ages join in lively and harmonious play together. Pupils' attendance has improved in the last year and is now broadly average. Pupils are aware of how to stay healthy. Most enjoy the tasty, healthy school lunches and the fruit available for morning snacks; they also enjoy plenty of exercise in the school's exciting playground and in after-school clubs. All pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's improvement and their community. They are justly proud of their very good support for others - each year choosing a different charity to support those less fortunate than themselves, while their Eco-committee works hard at recycling to 'save the planet', as one member explained. Pupils' obvious enjoyment of learning, their ability to sustain hard work and adapt to working with different groups and their good basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are of good quality. Teachers make very good use of assessment to match work to the needs of their pupils. This use of assessment, and flexible grouping arrangements mean that pupils are well challenged in their learning. Teachers make good use of questions to assess pupils' learning in lessons, adapting the questions to suit the level and ability of each pupil so that they are always able to answer and make a contribution. This does much to raise the self-esteem and confidence of pupils who are always eager to have a go. Teachers share targets for learning and encourage pupils to assess their own and others' work. Well trained and skilful learning support assistants make a good contribution to the learning

of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that these pupils too play a full part in lessons and make the same progress as others in the class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well adapted to the needs and interests of pupils with a clear focus on learning basic skills. A broad curriculum for personal, social and health education is well planned to cover topics that are relevant to the age of the pupils. The school's excellent links with the local schools' network and with a school in Norway have helped it develop a rich curriculum that motivates and excites pupils. It is well organised to develop pupils' interests and give them a good understanding of the wider world and different cultures. There is very good enrichment through visits and visitors and in the range of after-school clubs provided for all. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory. A lack of space hampers the opportunity children have to direct their own learning and develop good personal, social and emotional skills. The school does not plan enough opportunities for this throughout the day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance for its pupils. Staff are committed to providing a safe, secure environment in which pupils can thrive. Suitable arrangements for child protection, safeguarding and health and safety are in place. There are good procedures for induction to school in the Reception class, because close links with the pre-school group ensure children and parents are well prepared for the move into school. There is good guidance for learning because teachers make very good use of assessment to identify pupils' needs. Teachers keep pupils well informed about their progress, and pupils assess their own and others' work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by well trained and supportive teaching assistants and by support through the school's good links with external agencies. Excellent relationships between staff and with pupils ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in school, which provides a good foundation for their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a very good lead for raising standards in all areas of the school's work and is well supported by staff and governors in this. Together with colleagues, she ensures that pupils of all abilities are set challenging targets and are well supported to meet them. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. All staff and governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and contributing to improvements. The school's effective self-evaluation is reflected in its current improvement plan which has identified the key areas for improvement, while improvements in standards since the last inspection demonstrate the school's good capacity to bring about further improvement. The school's good care and support for its pupils is praised by very many parents, who applaud what the school does for their children. The school's high standing in the community owes much to its generous sharing of facilities, including the extensive playing fields, as well as to the invitations to older citizens to join the children for lunch each week. As one parent put it, 'the school is at the heart of our village'.

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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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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	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

21 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scremerston First School, Northumberland, TD15 2RB.

Thank you all for making my recent visit so pleasant and helping me find out so many things about your school. It was lovely to see how well you get along together and take care of each other. You certainly enjoy playtimes and make the most of the games and toys you have. I was very pleased to see how well older pupils look after younger ones and that no one was left out. It was good to hear how much you do to improve your own school and others' lives through fundraising. The Eco-committee is such a good idea in helping you understand how you can take care of resources and help the future of the planet. All of these things are teaching you how to be good citizens and that is something you will carry with you throughout your life. Your school is helping you to develop many other good qualities too.

You all enjoy learning and work hard because your teachers make lessons interesting and fun, and they make sure you can always do the work. This good teamwork is helping you to make good progress and reach good standards and I know this makes your parents and teachers very proud of you. You told me that you like many things about your lessons and that mathematics is a popular subject. You enjoy the many trips out of school where you sometimes work with pupils from other schools. Your links with the school in Norway are helping you find out about life in another country and helping you understand that schools can be different in many ways.

Your parents think that your teachers take good care of you and make you feel safe and happy in school and I agree. Yours is a good school because your teachers work hard to look after you and they teach you well and you follow the good example they set. The headteacher and teachers have a good plan of what to do next to keep your school getting better. I have added one thing about helping children in the Reception class to make choices for themselves in some of their learning. Perhaps some of you older ones could help them do this with their play during playtimes.

Thank you again for your kindness and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead Inspector