

# Berwick St Mary's C of E First School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122271
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	314255
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Sharkey

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Joyce Guthrie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Hush
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Newfields Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 1SP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01289 306170
<b>Fax number</b>	0

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Berwick St Mary's C of E is a small school on the edge of a coastal border town. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average and most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school, including traveller pupils, varies from year to year but is above average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Berwick St Mary's C of E First School provides a good quality of education and gives good value for money. It has a purposeful, caring environment in which pupils behave well and are highly motivated learners. Parents praise the school, a typical comment being, 'The staff are kind and approachable and interested in the children doing well.' Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because lessons are interesting, there are different activities and teachers help them to improve. The skills and confidence that pupils develop ensure that they are well prepared for their next stage in education and for the future.

The pupils make good progress and their achievement is good. Standards are above the national averages for pupils at the end of Year 2 and good progress continues through Key Stage 2. When the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 they have achieved well and standards in English, mathematics and science are above those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are good. They have many opportunities to contribute to the community, and are well prepared for their future life. The pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy and safe lifestyles. Attendance is satisfactory. Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin the good behaviour seen throughout the school.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' achievement across the school is good because of the quality of teaching. Lessons are well planned and learning activities meet the pupils' needs. Marking, however, is not used as well as it could be. This leads to missed opportunities to extend learning and guide pupils so that they know exactly what to do to improve. The school is good at meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants offer particularly good support, especially for those with learning difficulties. The curriculum is good and supports teaching and learning well. Many visits made locally and further afield, as well as visitors and extra-curricular activities, help to make learning exciting so that pupils want to learn. Pupils have the opportunity to learn French and German, which they find fun and therefore learn with confidence.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. The headteacher and senior staff are new to their roles but have a clear picture of what the school needs to do to improve; however formal procedures for school self-evaluation are lacking. Good team spirit among the staff ensures that everyone's ideas are valued. The governors provide effective guidance and keep a good balance between offering support to the school and challenging it to do even better. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of basic skills below those typical for their age. Throughout their Nursery and Reception years children make good progress so that by the end of the Foundation Stage they reach the standards expected for their age. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and ensure that adults plan well together, reflecting a clear understanding about how young children learn. As a result, children gain in confidence and independence and make particularly good progress in their personal development. They make good gains in their early skills, with teaching assistants playing a vital

role in the support and development of the children. The children behave very well and are keen to learn. They enjoy the opportunity to work outside, where they make music and have planned their own vegetable areas, as well as checking it for safety. The school has appropriate focus on extending the outdoor opportunities each day, ensuring that all children are challenged. Systems for tracking children's progress are used well so that support can be quickly put in place. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because early assessment highlights their needs.

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

- Establish formal procedures for recording the school's self-evaluation so that it assists the management of the school and its progress towards achieving its priorities for improvement.
- Improve teachers' marking so that pupils know what they have to do in order to move forward.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

When pupils start in Year 1 they have reached the nationally set learning goals for the end of the Foundation Stage. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2. The school's results of assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were above average overall. They were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Since 2003 there has been a trend of improvement in the school's results, although the 2007 results were not quite as high as in 2006. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make further good progress and most reach and often exceed the levels expected for their ages in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress towards the targets set for learning.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. This is a happy school where pupils say they feel safe and secure because the school has rules that are fair and teachers watch carefully during the day. The pupils enjoy good relationships at all levels within the school and thoroughly enjoy learning because of the effective teaching and variety of learning opportunities on offer. Pupils actively try to keep themselves fit through regular exercise in school and through healthy eating. Pupils have an excellent understanding of these aspects of their development. Attendance is satisfactory; the school is working with parents to raise attendance. Pupils contribute to the wider community through their support of local and national charities and through good links with the church. The school council is in its early stages but enables pupils to gain an understanding of citizenship. Pupils feel their views are heard through the school council and are pleased to see their suggestions, such as the reorganisation of playtime activities to accommodate football, being implemented. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their development are very good and pupils learn about different faiths as well as cultural traditions such as Scottish Burns night. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In all lessons, the very good relationships staff have with their pupils ensure pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work. Teaching is enhanced by the welcoming, well-resourced classrooms, which support learning effectively. Pupils make good progress because the staff plan work well to meet their needs. This planning is based on accurate assessment of pupils' progress so that the work is challenging for different groups. This is particularly important as pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The marking of pupils' work is generally effective, but not all marking explains to pupils how they can improve their work. In lessons, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good, enhanced by the contribution of teaching assistants, and accounts for their good progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. It meets requirements and takes account of national initiatives and guidance. It responds successfully to the challenge of mixed-age classes. This includes grouping pupils according to ability. Staff promote pupils' personal development successfully, as well as teaching the basic curriculum of English, mathematics and science. This leads to good achievements across the school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn many extra subjects. These range from photography to guitar and include sport. Pupils have exciting opportunities to visit theatres and museums, and a visitor from India helped to enrich art and writing. Art work displayed throughout the school is good and shows clever use of a wide range of materials. Teachers integrate some subjects together successfully, but this is not yet developed as creatively as it might be to include different subjects and exploit the links between them. Excellent links with the community contribute much to children's learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and all the required procedures for safeguarding, including child protection, are in place. The personal care and support offered by the school are recognised and valued by pupils and parents and are very effective. This contributes to the good academic and personal development of pupils. The tracking of children's academic progress is good. It is used to plan further work and improvements in the school's provision, although marking is not as effective in guiding pupils to make even better progress. The school makes good use of outside help to support pupils and maintains good links with schools in the town. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is carefully managed and effective.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior leadership team work together very effectively. In her early days of leading the school, the headteacher is too modest in her evaluation of how things stand. All leaders and managers know the school well, but procedures for recording this more formally are lacking. Subject leaders have a good

understanding of their subjects and carry out their role well in monitoring, tracking pupils' progress and planning for school improvement. Leaders check standards and provision thoroughly through monitoring and introduce appropriate strategies to tackle any weaknesses. This is exemplified by the rapid action taken by the school in response to the slight dip in standards in 2007. Governance is good. The governors are well informed about all aspects of school life and discharge their responsibilities efficiently.

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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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	3
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**

14 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Berwick St Mary's C of E First School, Northumberland,

TD15 1SP

Thank you for making me feel very welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and have good memories of how friendly you are, not just towards me but also towards each other and your teachers. I was impressed with how keen you were to talk to me, telling me how much you enjoy school and how you help other people and raise money for charities. I saw how well behaved you are in lessons, in the playground and as you moved around school.

I looked at other parts of school life, including how teachers help you to understand about being healthy. When I asked you about this you amazed me at how much you knew about the importance of the healthy food, regular exercise and how to keep safe. I agree with you that your headteacher and teachers help you feel safe and secure in school and help you when you have problems.

When I came into lessons I looked at the work you were doing and admired the quality I saw and how much you really enjoyed working hard. Your teachers are also working hard to give you good support with your work. I have suggested that they make more comments in your books so that you can understand how to do even better.

Teachers have to plan your lessons and they do this well. Your headteacher has also to think carefully about what the school does well and what everyone thinks needs to be done to make improvements. I have suggested to her, along with teachers and governors, that this is looked at more closely, so that the many good things I found in the school can be strengthened.

I have never before visited a school that is so near the sea; you are very lucky. I hope you all enjoy the rest of this term and continue to keep having fun.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector