

# Holy Trinity Church of England First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122282
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	314258
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Earley

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Bowlas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Dawn Groves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2004
<b>School address</b>	Bell Tower Place Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 1NB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01289 306142
<b>Fax number</b>	01289 303558

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. 25 children attend the school's maintained Nursery each morning and there are 29 full-time children in Reception. The proportion of full-time pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small number of pupils learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark Award and the local authority Eco Schools Award.

## 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 with many outstanding features. The headteacher provides strong, visionary leadership. The relentless drive by staff and governors to provide the best for all the pupils in their care leads to above average standards, excellent personal development and an extremely caring and inclusive community. The view of one parent typifies that of many, 'The school brings out the best in the children at all stages.'

Achievement is good. In 2007, standards in Year 2 were well above average. This is because of a combination of good teaching and the very positive attitudes that pupils have to learning. From a starting point in the Nursery that is typical for the children's age good progress occurs across the school. By the end of Year 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are better than expected for pupils of their age.

The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. The pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Good attendance reflects the enjoyment pupils have of school. The school provides an exceptional range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and contribute to the community. The combination of good academic standards and levels of personal development prepares pupils very well for their next stage of education.

Teaching and learning are good. They produce confident and eager learners. Questions are used well to challenge pupils' existing ideas, skills and knowledge. Marking in English is very effective because it offers advice to pupils about how to improve their work. In other subjects, however, marking does not do enough to guide pupils' improvement. Teachers know pupils well and use assessment effectively to plan work that meets the needs of pupils. The good curriculum has strong emphasis on the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The recent acquisition of laptops is successfully extending the ICT provision. Lessons are enriched by a good range of educational visits and visitors and extra-curricular clubs.

Care, guidance and support are excellent and are underpinned by an extremely strong family atmosphere based on Christian principles. All the required systems for maintaining pupils' health and safety meet requirements. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those pupils who learn English as an additional language. This means that their progress is good, like other pupils.

Leadership and management are good and ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. Self-evaluation is realistic and leads to relevant targets for improving the school. Staff work well as a team and recognise that their leadership skills can be further developed in order to help the school realise its high aspirations. Governance is good; governors hold the school to account for its performance. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, and the school has a good capacity to improve in future.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in attractive surroundings. Children are well cared for and supported. Staff are systematically improving the quality of the outdoor curriculum to ensure it provides for all six areas of learning to match the high standard provided indoors. There are lots of opportunities

for children to decide things for themselves and to develop their independence. This helps them to make good progress in all areas of their learning, but most notably in their personal, social and emotional development. The new Foundation Stage manager is beginning to develop her leadership by planning even closer links with the Nursery class to provide greater flexibility in teaching and learning. Links with parents are very good. Good improvements to the teaching of reading and writing have taken place since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good and assessment is used well to ensure that tasks are well suited to children of all abilities.

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

- Improve the contributions of staff to the school's management by broadening their leadership skills.
- Raise the quality of marking in all subjects to that found in English so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. All pupils, whatever their backgrounds or abilities, make good progress. When children enter the Nursery, their development is generally typical for children of their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the end of the Reception class most children exceed the standards expected for their age.

Good progress continues in Key Stage 1. For the last four years, standards have been significantly above average at Year 2 and were so again in 2007. School data and inspection evidence indicate that pupils in the current Year 2 achieve well and are on track to reach high standards again in 2008. In Key Stage 2, the good progress continues. By the end of Year 4, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards at Year 4 are above expectations for their age in English, mathematics and science. Recent initiatives to improve skills in writing are leading to very good progress. As a result, standards in writing in Year 4 are much higher than expected.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. Pupils have a 'Health Council' and are proud of events such as a sponsored skip to encourage exercise. Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak warmly of lessons which they find interesting and often fun. Attendance is good. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They respect each others' views and younger pupils are well looked after by their 'Big Friends' in Year 4. Pupils take on many other responsibilities as playground buddies, dinner helpers, librarians and house captains. The democratically elected school council is proactive and proud of things it has helped improve, such as playground activities. Pupils are confident that their views will be heard. The future of the world is also carefully considered by the eco council. Its initiatives include recycling, saving electricity and composting fruit waste. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility, work in teams, become independent and think for themselves. Consequently, by the time they reach Year 4, they are confident, mature young people, very well prepared for their move to middle school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and assessment is used effectively so that tasks are well suited to pupils of different abilities. Relationships are very good and pupils are confident learners. Lessons are typically lively and interesting. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils explored the classroom to investigate magnetism and in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils eagerly responded to challenging tasks on digital roots. Teachers use questions very effectively to challenge pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think. Occasionally, explanations are not completely clear and pupils misunderstand instructions; this slows progress. Very effective marking in English is helping to raise standards in writing. In other subjects, marking is not as consistent and often lacks suggestions as to how pupils might improve. Teaching assistants are well deployed and effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who learn English as an additional language. This enables them to make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is enriched by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. The school makes good provision for the performing arts. There is a strong emphasis on developing the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and these skills are effectively extended in other subjects. The school is beginning to provide opportunities for pupils of all ages to work together on a range of subjects in order to promote their academic and personal skills. Pupils understand how to lead healthy lifestyles because there is a very effective programme of personal, social and health education. There are very strong links with outside agencies, including the church and local schools, which help to extend the curriculum. Curriculum planning is good and makes sure that pupils make steady gains in their skills and knowledge as they move through the school, although there is a lack of a readily accessible overview in order to enhance learning.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are excellent. This contributes to the pupils' above average standards and excellent personal development. Pastoral care is particularly strong. Staff know their pupils extremely well. It upholds Christian values in a very supportive family atmosphere, enhanced by very strong links with parents and the local church. A parent commented that, 'We are very impressed by the caring atmosphere throughout the school.' Suitable systems for child protection, first aid and risk assessments are in place. Pupils say that school is a very friendly place to be and that they feel safe and well looked after. There is a very good tracking system which helps staff identify when pupils may need help or further challenge. This leads to clear targets for improvement. Very strong partnerships with outside agencies mean that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who learn English as an additional language receive the support needed to help them progress at the same rate as others.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is well supported by her very able deputy. They share a very clear vision for improvement with staff and governors and all work well together as a team. The school's self-evaluation is thorough. It leads to a pertinent school development plan which acts as a guide for the actions of the whole school community. It leads to initiatives which are helping to further improve standards, for example, in raising standards in writing. Staff have a good understanding of the subjects and areas for which they are responsible and recent initiatives are helping them to develop a wider view of the work of the whole school. The school recognises the need to further develop the leadership skills of all staff in order to move the school on.

Governance is good. Governors know the school well and ensure that it gives good value for money. They are very supportive and play an important role in helping to shape the direction of the school. The overwhelming majority of parents have very positive views of the school and take advantage of many opportunities to be involved in their children's education.





## 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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### 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?	1

<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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Trinity Church of England First School, Northumberland, TD15 1NB

You gave us a very warm welcome when we visited your school. Thank you very much. Your school is good and some parts are excellent. We enjoyed talking to you because you were very polite and very confident to talk with us about the school. We were very impressed by the way you all know how to stay healthy and keep fit. Team captains, librarians and school councillors do an excellent job in helping to make the school a better place. You all get on really well together and older pupils are very careful to help those younger than themselves.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- you make good progress, especially in writing, and your lessons are interesting
- there are lots of visits, visitors and after-school clubs and this helps you with your learning
- the school takes extremely good care of you and keeps a good check on how well you are doing
- the school is like a big family where everyone tries to help each other
- you enjoy coming to school and are very well prepared for the next stage in your education.

The school has been asked to improve your education by doing two things:

- all the teachers are going to have more opportunities to take the lead in improving the school
- the marking of your work is going to help you to improve in all subjects.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and for being very helpful.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead inspector