

Hugh Joicey Church of England First School, Ford

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122291
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	314260
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lord Joicey
Headteacher	Mrs Rosemary Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Ford Village Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2QA
Telephone number	01890 820217
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural village school serves small, scattered communities. The number on roll has recently risen significantly and more than half the pupils come from outside the immediate locality. The socio-economic background of pupils is broadly average. All pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well 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

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It is founded on Christian values. Parents express complete satisfaction with the school. One communicated a typical view by writing, 'The children all race up the drive to school in the morning which is a sure indicator of how happy they are to be there.' Attendance has improved recently and is above average. Pupils form positive relationships and have good attitudes to learning. They make friends easily and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils love school, the activities in lessons and the appealing enrichment programme of visits and school clubs. Pupils feel safe and know who to turn to if they need help. They also know why it is important to be healthy. During lunchtime extra portions of fresh beans were in high demand! Pupils' good involvement in sporting events has helped the school secure an Activemark award. Pupils regularly contribute to village events such as May Day and the school's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The natural ability of pupils varies markedly from year-to-year and, because of this, standards are variable. All pupils achieve well compared to their starting points. Those currently in Year 4 are attaining exceptionally high standards having entered the school from starting points higher than what is typical for their age. Pupils currently in Year 2 are working at the expected level. They are making good progress from starting points lower than typically found. The good progress made in all year groups reflects good teaching, high expectations and a challenging curriculum that matches pupils' individual needs. Teachers make good use of marking to guide pupils but the opportunities for pupils to review their own progress and set targets for improvement during lessons are not fully exploited.

The curriculum is good. The strong focus on the acquisition of the key skills of literacy and numeracy has led to a rise in standards. Other subjects are often taught through lively topics. The outstanding enrichment programme, sometimes developed through excellent partnerships with other schools, introduces pupils to valuable experiences. These help them acquire future life skills such as being able to work in teams. For example, pupils worked collaboratively to build huts during a visit to a forest. Pupils learn about distant places and have a good grasp of the history of their locality. Their understanding of the richness and diversity of modern society is, however, relatively weak. The care given to all pupils is good. Those with learning difficulties benefit from sensitive support. Academic guidance to pupils is effective and based upon a good knowledge of each pupil's performance.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The experienced headteacher has worked effectively with staff and governors to ensure good improvement since the previous inspection which is demonstrated by higher standards. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and a clear plan for further improvement. The governing body provide well-founded support and challenge. Proven management systems ensure the school is well prepared for its transition to leadership by a new headteacher later this year. The school has a clear educational direction which bodes well for improvement in the future. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation stage is good. This year, Reception children joined the school with levels of development that are higher than those typical for their age. These children were confident in their use of language and literacy, mathematical and social skills. Attainment on

entry to the Reception class has been steadily rising. One reason is that good partnerships have been established with staff from the nearby pre-school provision. Teaching is good and expectations are high. Consequently, Reception children make quick gains in all the areas of learning. Most children can say letter sounds correctly and some can link them together to form simple words. In the recent past, by the end of Reception most have reached the levels of development expected for children of their age. This year many children are well on their way to exceed them. Progress is good because children benefit from carefully planned opportunities that incorporate an appropriate balance between adult directed and child-initiated activities. In personal development, for example, children are already using good skills to organise their role-play in the café, to investigate and to tidy away resources. Good leadership ensures the reception classroom is well organised and resourced and is a safe and caring environment for children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities during lessons to encourage pupils to reflect on their progress so that they have a clearer picture of how to improve.
- Promote pupils understanding of the richness of and diversity of modern Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Standards of pupils currently in Year 4 are exceptionally high in reading and mathematics and above the levels expected in writing and science. Given that this small cohort of pupils entered the school with starting points were higher than what is typical for their age they have achieved well. Pupils currently in Year 2 are working at the expected level. These pupils have also made good progress. The presence of small year groups, sometimes as low as two pupils, leads to some variation in standards. The standards attained by the small groups of pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in 2005, exceptionally high in 2006 and above average in 2007. Pupils in 2007 made good progress as they entered school at broadly typical levels. All pupils achieve equally well. This is because provision is finely tuned to meet pupils' individual needs and they are set challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they benefit from additional support that is sensitively matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and enjoy the links with pupils in other schools. They acquire good personal skills and positive attitudes to learning which prepares them well for their next stage of education. Their behaviour is excellent and adds much to the way they learn and play. During playtimes pupils of different ages play harmoniously together. Attendance has improved this year and is above average.

Pupils know how important it is to keep safe and be healthy. They handle resources safely and they know how to use the Internet sensibly. Pupils know that, if they are troubled, there are adults they can turn to for confidential help and advice. Pupils enthusiastic use of playground equipment and after school clubs typifies their positive approach to a healthy lifestyle and to developing future life skills. Pupils serving as school councillors meet regularly to discuss how the school might be further improved such as improving playground markings and the building

of a willow hut for others to enjoy. Older pupils are currently offering suggestions towards the drafting of the school Travel Plan.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are managed well and are known to all staff personally. Pupils make good progress in lessons. This is because of a combination of high expectations amongst teachers supported by their good subject knowledge and effective planning. Teachers capture pupils' interest and build well on pupils' positive attitudes. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 were challenged to come up with solutions to the parking problem in the road outside school. Their teacher used digital photographs effectively to stimulate discussion and guide good quality recording of their ideas and thoughts about alternative solutions. The good quality writing that followed is typical of the way teachers are raising the standards of pupils' presentation.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They use praise to reward good effort and to inform pupils about errors. The very effective teaching gives pupils the confidence to express points of view in the knowledge that their views will be listened to and valued. Teachers have not yet, however, developed this further by challenging pupils to reflect regularly on their own progress and achievement. Consequently, pupils' ability to assess their work is underdeveloped and does not contribute as well as it could to raise standards further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum helps pupils to achieve well. Priority is given to the acquisition of skills in literacy and numeracy and these are transferred well to work in other subjects. There is a good mix of lessons, some with a strong subject focus, others based on well-planned topic work. The provision for writing is better than it was at the last inspection because pupils now write for a greater variety of purposes. Pupils learn about distant places, sometimes by tracing the journey of 'Freddie', the school bear, on his holidays. Pupils have a good understanding of their local culture. A narrowness in the curriculum reduces the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of modern British society.

Partnerships with other schools, the use of visits, visitors, and the programme of extra-curricular activities are outstanding. Many appealing visits enhance pupils' knowledge and skills, for example, by working with a visiting artist and attending events for music and drama. Visiting specialists provided football coaching and gymnastic training.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are quite right in their views that care, guidance and support is good. The view of one typifies that of many, 'this school has a very special atmosphere, it is warm and very welcoming. There is genuine caring and kindness.' Arrangements for child protection and risk assessment are rigorous and safeguarding meets all statutory requirements. Pupils are well cared for and supervised. Appropriate policies are followed for health and safety, and there are no recorded incidents of bullying, exclusions or racism. The generous adult to pupil ratios in this school

provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to be supported individually. More able pupils are challenged well and those with learning difficulties access good quality additional help. This helps all pupils to achieve well. The school has a good system for assessing and recording individual pupil's progress. The information is used to set each pupil challenging targets in literacy and numeracy. Older pupils benefit from an effective transition programme to the local middle school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This year there has been a significant rise in the number of pupils on roll; a reflection of how highly parents rate the school. The headteacher, through very effective and purposeful leadership, is helping the school to achieve its main aim of promoting, 'An environment which fosters a good attitude to work, leading to high standards in academic and all other aspects of the school life'. A small, but enthusiastic, team of staff and dedicated governors support the headteacher well. Governors' use focused visits to school in their effective role as 'critical friends' by evaluating for themselves the school's strengths and weaknesses'.

School leaders work successfully together and deploy their diverse range of talents effectively. Positive outcomes of leadership are evident in improvements in standards, the curriculum and in the accuracy of self-evaluation. School leaders now judge provision more precisely because monitoring procedures have improved. Excellent partnerships with leaders of other schools impact positively on pupils' achievement and personal development. Leaders set challenging targets in all year groups and these are usually met. The track record of success and complementary skills of leaders shows the school has a good capacity to improve.

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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?	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 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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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

16 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hugh Joicey Church of England First School, Ford, Northumberland, TD15 2QA

Thank you for helping me when I inspected your school. I enjoyed meeting you. I was impressed by your friendliness, good manners and excellent behaviour. I enjoyed joining your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. Your school councillors told me how they have helped to improve it.

These are the things I found out about your school. You attend a good school. Some of its work is outstanding. You work hard and regularly reach above average standards. You all make good progress. I know that you understand it is important to work towards your literacy and numeracy targets.

I also know from talking to you, looking at displays and viewing your school website that you really enjoy school and the fun activities that are provided for you. I know that you have particularly enjoyed the opportunities you have had to learn alongside pupils of other local schools, visiting interesting places and working with experts. I know that you feel safe at school and that you know how to get help if you need it. You told me how important it is to be fit and healthy. I also know you have been successful at raising funds for good causes and that you join in with village events enthusiastically.

There are two things that the school could do to make your education even better. These are to:

- encourage you to think about your own progress. Checking your work yourselves at the end of lessons will help you know what you have learned
- help you to understand that life in modern Britain is often very different from the rural setting where you live.

I wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector