

# Tweedmouth Prior Park First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122187
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	327651
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Mawer

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	183
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Karen Thorburn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Patricia Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Dean Drive Tweedmouth Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2DB

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 November 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	327651

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average first school. A large majority of pupils come from an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British families. Over a quarter of them have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above average. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for Nursery and Reception children. Nursery children have half-day placements. The school has achieved Activemark and a Silver Eco Award as well as Healthy Schools Standard. In 2008 it gained an International Schools Award for its strong links with other countries.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school provides outstanding pastoral care and support. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well because relationships are excellent. The school's caring and happy atmosphere creates a positive sense of well-being where pupils say they feel safe and secure. Pupils respond well to the rich curriculum, which motivates them greatly. Parents who made their views known value highly the support their children receive. 'My child began as a timid toddler and is now blossoming into a happy and confident eight-year-old', was a typically positive comment.

Personal development is good. Pupils have a strong awareness of healthy lifestyles through regular exercise and a balanced diet. The 'let's get cooking' project is flourishing, with pupils using vegetables they grow themselves in school and selling any surplus to buy seeds for the following year. These good enterprise skills are preparing them well for later life. Attendance is below the national average. Despite the school's best efforts to reward good attendance some pupils still take holidays during term time.

The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is good. Pupils are proud of their school and contribute to its development through their different areas of responsibility. Staff forge close partnerships with parents, for example, through family learning activities. Local community links are promoted well through participation in local events and good links with outside agencies. The school has done much in recent years to successfully increase pupils' understanding of different communities around the world.

Achievement is good. Pupils start Year 1 with skills that are below average. They make good progress and meet expectation by the end of Year 4. Standards in mathematics are improving due to a number of successful strategies, but are still lower than in other subjects. The gap between girls' and boys' performance is narrowing following a determined effort to raise boys' achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most vulnerable receive very good support and achieve as well as their peers.

Teaching and learning are good, enabling pupils to make good progress. Strengths in the best lessons include effective planning and assessment, involving pupils in their learning and the use of good resources. These positive features bring enjoyment and purpose to lessons. When these elements are missing teaching is less successful because tasks are less challenging and pupils are unclear about the focus of the lesson so are unsure about what they are expected to learn. Progress is tracked accurately and this allows the school to pinpoint where pupils are underachieving and provide 'catch up' programmes. The guidance pupils receive on their progress and how to meet their targets is less successful. Pupils are not always sure about how to improve.

The headteacher manages her staff well with a strong focus on team work and collaboration. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school clearly recognises its strengths and weaknesses. Governors and the senior management team ensure the school moves forward by implementing effective actions to tackle concerns. This has ensured good improvement since the last inspection. Good achievement has been maintained and there are equal opportunities for all learners to succeed. This determination to improve and clear view of the way ahead, together with recent improvements, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The EYFS provides a good platform for children's learning and their start to school life. The rich environment enables them to settle easily. Imaginative planning is done collaboratively and includes as much outdoor as indoor activities, so learning is imaginative and fun. Children begin in the Nursery with skills that are well below what is typical for three-year-olds. Because staff are caring and give them plenty of support, children learn to become more independent and achieve well. They make good progress although standards are below average by the end of Reception. Very generous staffing levels impact positively on all learning, but especially in speaking and listening and personal development, where skills on entry are particularly low. The children develop a lively interest in learning and are keen to explore the many activities that are provided. The balance between teacher-led activities and children choosing their own tasks is good, particularly in role play. Clear routines help children to feel safe and secure. They are taught to share and to respect each other's feelings. Good leadership and high levels of commitment shown by all staff contribute considerably to the good provision and children's successful learning. They are well prepared for Year 1 because of increased personal and social skills and confidence in their learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistent use of assessment information and good resources to plan and deliver work that challenges and engages all groups of learners and leads to better progress especially in mathematics.
- Make it clearer to pupils what they are expected to learn in lessons and keep them more informed about the progress they are making.
- Improve attendance levels.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards reached by pupils meet expectations by the end of Year 4 and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in relation to their below average starting point at the start of Key Stage 1. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 although standards remain below average. The results of the school's assessments at the end of Year 2 have been below average since the last inspection with mathematics showing least improvement. Although changes are starting to improve pupils' progress the impact was not seen in 2008 when teachers' assessments showed a dip because of the lower ability of this year group. Progress accelerates in Years 3 and 4 and pupils reach the level expected for their age. Results of optional tests at the end of Year 4 have varied from year-to-year, but overall have been in line with those expected in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The school's most recent assessments follow this trend and the school is taking rigorous steps to improve standards in mathematics throughout the school. Early signs are positive, with standards rising throughout the school.

Over the years girls have performed better than boys in many subjects. The gap is narrowing, as more appropriate planning and resources for boys are used in the teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective help and make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are friendly and mix well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are closely involved with the local community and global understanding is fostered well through links with different countries. They are rightly proud of their fundraising which includes supporting an orphanage in Kenya and a school in Uganda. Pupils have a good appreciation of right and wrong. Their behaviour is good and bullying is rare. Although most pupils attend regularly and on time attendance is below average because of the number of pupils taking holidays during term time. The school council gives pupils a voice and responsibility to improve the school. Recent suggestions about a tyre play area have been acted upon. As members of an Eco Team there are more opportunities for them to act responsibly, such as saving electricity in the school. Pupils understand how to keep safe and adopt a healthy lifestyle, especially in their choice of meals and enthusiasm for exercise. Keep fit programmes are a feature of the start to each day. Pupils leave school with a sound range of basic skills and a good understanding of business enterprise, which prepare them well for the next stage of their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships are strong and, as a result, pupils want to do well. Teachers' good questioning techniques enable pupils to demonstrate what they know and can do. Resources are used well in most lessons to enrich the learning and keep learners engaged. Many teachers use drama successfully to extend language skills and increase confidence. Year 3 used role-play to develop their skills in writing character studies. In one lesson, the story of Rama and Sita was chosen well by the teacher; as well as extending pupils' literacy skills it gave them an insight into different cultures.

Classes are grouped in different ways to help to extend the learning. In most cases assessment information and planning are used to match learning to individual needs. However, on occasions tasks are not sufficiently challenging and pupils lose interest. Throughout the school timely and focused support from teaching assistants is good and this benefits, in particular, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Where teaching is occasionally less effective, pupils are not told the focus of the lessons, so they are unclear about what they are expected to learn or how well they have done. Work is marked regularly and includes encouragement but does not always suggest improvements.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is underpinned by an effective emphasis on personal education. The development of the social and emotional aspects of learning also runs seamlessly through the curriculum. There is now more focus on practical and creative activities, giving pupils greater enjoyment in their learning. Basic skills including information and communication technology (ICT) are promoted successfully across the curriculum and consequently pupils make good progress. Learning is often enriched through visits and visitors and this keeps interest levels high. A diverse range of sporting activities, planned in conjunction with a local Sports Partnership

and an extensive range of clubs after school add considerably to the quality of learning experiences throughout the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good overall. In this very caring school, pupils and their families are supported exceptionally well. There are good relationships with outside agencies to ensure that the personal and academic needs of all pupils are addressed. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most vulnerable pupils are identified early, and provision is very good. The safety of pupils is paramount. All safeguarding measures are in place and meet government requirements. Risk assessments are an integral part of school planning.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Reliable systems are used to track pupils' progress and underachievement is addressed effectively through intervention programmes. A new programme is currently being used to plug the gaps in children's knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Many pupils are aware of their targets in reading, writing and mathematics. They are less sure of how to achieve these targets as teachers do not share enough with pupils about how well they are progressing in lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior management team have an accurate view of the school's performance. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection and priorities for development are maintaining good progress and generally meeting challenging targets. Staff work effectively as a team to promote the personal development and well-being of learners. In particular, they make a significant difference to the lives of a large number of vulnerable pupils, raising their self-esteem and belief that they can do well.

Governance is good. Although the school found it difficult to recruit governors in the past, there is now a full governing body. Many are still new to the school, but through training, and monitoring visits, they are quickly developing an awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They make a positive contribution to school improvement by evaluating how well the school is doing especially in the pupils' personal development. After a recent audit of governors' strengths, their skills are being used effectively to discharge their duties. Governors work well with the senior management team to ensure prudent spending so that the school provides good value for money.



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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tweedmouth Prior Park First School, Northumberland, TD15 2DB

On behalf of Mr Nelson and myself, I would like to thank you all for being so helpful and kind to us both during our recent visit. You played a big part in making our visit so enjoyable and I'd like to share with you what we found out about your school.

You will be pleased to know that you go to a good school, where the pastoral care and support you receive from the staff is first rate. You make good progress in your work and are taught well. You told us how much you enjoyed school and we saw that for ourselves in the way you work hard in lessons, behave well and help one another around the school. We were pleased with the good range of activities you take part in across the curriculum. We were particularly impressed with the way that the Nursery and Reception children start the day with exercises and how good you all are at keeping fit. It was also good to see that all of you in the school are learning about how people live in other countries and are supporting an orphanage in Kenya and a school in Uganda.

We talked to your headteacher, the governors and all of the staff about how hard they work to make the school as good as it can be. So that it will continue to improve we have asked them to make all of your lessons as interesting as the best lessons in the school and to challenge you all with work that makes you think hard. We have also asked that you become more involved in what you are learning in lessons so you will know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. You can help by telling your teachers what makes your lessons exciting and whether the work is hard enough for you. I am sure you will all work hard to reach your targets and will be keen to know what you need to do next to get even better. Attendance at your school is not as good as it could be and you can help to improve this by attending regularly.

I hope you all enjoy the lovely Christmas activities being planned for you all at school.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Mawer

Lead inspector