

Broomley First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122189
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327652
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	117
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Dale
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Coulson
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Road Stocksfield Northumberland NE43 7NN
Telephone number	01661 842271
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized first school serves families from the village and locality of Stocksfield in Tynedale, an area where living standards are high. A well below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British families. Of the few from other ethnic backgrounds, none is learning English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception class. The school is partnered with another first school in nearby Whittonstall and the recently appointed headteacher is in charge of both.

There is a pre-school on site, which is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Broomley is an outstanding first school that has improved exceptionally well since it was last inspected. Pupils thrive because the headteacher, very ably assisted by her senior team, provides a very clear educational direction for all staff. Good and often excellent teaching successfully promotes the school's values and an enjoyment of learning. Teaching staff, most of whom are recently appointed, use challenging targets methodically and successfully to give pupils clear goals for their learning. Pupils widen their knowledge, understanding and skills through a truly excellent curriculum which reflects the school's setting in its community. In turn, exceptionally high standards prevail; pupils' achievement and their personal development are outstanding. This is a very inclusive school where everyone has many opportunities to develop their talents and demonstrate accomplishments through, for example, celebration assemblies and the popular 'Best of Broomley' awards ceremony. The school has excellent links with parents and their confidence in it is exceptionally high. Many make perceptive, positive comments about the school's development. One comment sums up their views: 'We feel that the teaching staff at Broomley are an excellent team. They provide a very caring and supportive atmosphere for the children and it is clear they are continually striving to improve the school'.

Children join the Reception class with skills and abilities a little above those typical for their age. They make outstanding progress to begin Year 1 having reached standards that are well above average. The 2008 statutory teachers' assessments show exceptionally high standards are sustained at the end of Year 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. Impressively, they follow the pattern of well above average standards achieved in previous years. The school has successfully improved writing standards this year and pupils presently in Year 2 are attaining very high standards overall. The school has also sustained high standards in reading and writing in Years 3 and 4 and improved mathematics standards from below to well above average in 2008. Sustaining very high standards from year to year is an excellent achievement. However, last year fewer Year 4 pupils made excellent progress in mathematics than in reading and writing and this continues to be the pattern.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and assemblies. They act considerately and politely. Confidence when speaking and courtesy when listening characterise their contribution to discussion. They thoroughly enjoy school and speak warmly of their friendships. Attendance is above average although some pupils take term-time holidays. Pupils have a really good grasp of the need for healthy eating, physical activity and personal hygiene. They contribute exceptionally well in many ways to their school and the community it serves. Excellent social and basic skills prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education.

Outstanding leadership, management and governance ensure the school gives excellent value for money. The school contributes well to community cohesion, especially through its most effective partnerships with the local community and the local church. Links with schools abroad and work in religious education widen pupils' understanding, although their awareness of the diversity of British life is underdeveloped. Given the school's determination to build on its strengths and its exceptionally successful track record since the last inspection, it has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Significant recent improvements to staffing and facilities have successfully led children to higher achievement. Parents are delighted with the way their children settle into the Reception class and are justifiably proud of the progress they make. Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are a little above those typically expected for their age, except in language development, which is broadly as expected. Over the past two years, they have made excellent progress and many reach very high standards in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. This year, a great majority of children are well on track to exceed the early learning goals with many doing exceptionally well in their reading and mathematical development. A well-established system of visits eases transition into the Reception class and the very well regarded 'home-school book' initiative keeps parents informed of progress and helps them support their children's learning. Staff emphasise courtesy and consideration throughout the day which, with well-established routines, enable children to form positive relationships and conduct themselves impeccably. Their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Within an appropriate balance of independent and adult-supported activities, children make sensible choices and participate fully. Their confidence grows and they develop abilities to learn by working very well together or independently. They readily make good use of the recently enhanced indoor and outdoor facilities which support all areas of learning. Innovative use of local resources such as a nearby woodland for the 'Forest School' initiative makes a major contribution to enhancing children's investigative and social skills. Rigorous assessment identifies individual learning needs and expert teaching ensures children make excellent progress. Children's outstanding achievement is the result of clear and highly effective leadership which ensures the highest standards of care and support and which provides an excellent basis for further development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 to the same high levels achieved in reading and writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils reach outstandingly high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They begin Year 1 with skills and abilities that are well above the national average. Pupils achieve outstandingly well by sustaining such high levels of attainment as they move through the school. The 2008 statutory teachers' assessments show exceptionally high standards at the end of Year 2 with a very high proportion reaching the highest level in reading and mathematics. Pupils presently in Year 2 are again well on course to meet or exceed challenging targets for attaining the highest level in mathematics, reading and now in writing as the result of a thoroughly well-implemented writing initiative. Very effective support ensures pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress and attain much more highly than their counterparts nationally. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Standards in reading and writing in Year 4 have been consistently above the local authority average in recent years. Since the last inspection, mathematics standards have improved from below to well above average in 2008. However, last year more pupils made excellent progress and exceeded challenging targets in reading and writing than in mathematics. The picture is the same in the present Year 4. Standards are very high in reading, writing and mathematics but, now more

than two-thirds through the school year, fewer pupils have already exceeded their challenging targets for mathematics than for reading and writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They benefit enormously from a very wide range of opportunities in lessons, assemblies and visits to heritage centres, and through extensive use made of the local environment. Together, these experiences lead to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils speak strongly about the importance of healthy eating; for example, the school council happily show their skilfully constructed electronic presentation of ideas for healthy packed lunches. They take part enthusiastically in physical activities and voluntary sports. The school deservedly has the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and the sense of accomplishment that comes from their endeavour. Pupils say they feel safe in school and comment that anti-social behaviour and bullying are rare and that they themselves know how to deal with it. Pupils behave impeccably in lessons and considerately in the hall and corridors, reflecting the school's success in developing personal responsibility. Older pupils are caring in looking after their younger schoolmates. Pupils become willingly involved in charitable causes. They make a vital contribution to community cohesion by participating in activities with the local community. Their environmental work and involvement in the school garden project successfully led to an Eco-Schools award. The Year 4 'school inspection team' initiative has resulted in a remarkable mutual understanding between adults and pupils of what is needed to make learning effective. Pupils' excellent social and team-working skills, their experience of enterprise and well above average basic skills prepare them exceedingly well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching leads pupils to make exceptional progress in lessons and inspires outstanding achievement. Teachers provide well-suited activities which strongly motivate pupils who, in turn, are enthusiastic, industrious and present their work very well. Teachers successively extend pupils' knowledge by taxing them, especially the most able, to apply learning to new situations. In the best lessons, skilful use of interactive whiteboards and cleverly pitched questions often encourage pupils to participate fully in lessons and give their views and detailed explanations. Teachers reinforce key points at the end of lessons and consolidate pupils' learning thoroughly. However, on a few occasions, questioning is unclear and lacks challenge, or class discussion goes on for too long to the point when pupils' attention wanders. In these lessons pupils do not make as much progress as they could. New teachers are quickly helped to become vital members of the staff team and the school is working to enhance their expertise and increase consistency throughout.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

All pupils have full access to an outstanding and well-balanced curriculum which is successfully arranged in a way that develops their knowledge, understanding and skills very successfully. Pupils have an exceedingly rich range of opportunities to take part in physical and cultural

activities, out-of-school events, and after-school clubs. Outstanding use of local resources, particularly those associated with the countryside and rural economy, makes the curriculum exciting and relevant to all. Pupils' knowledge of their local community and its heritage is developed successfully through links with nearby schools and through local studies and visits. Developing international links and work in religious education and the arts widen pupils' perspectives of life outside Britain. Excellent partnerships with local businesses, community associations and the church further enrich pupils' skills and understanding and make a vital contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, physical, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has a very tangible culture of care for individuals and it offers outstanding pastoral support. Very well-founded arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare fully meet requirements. Staff know all pupils well and, in turn, pupils justifiably say they feel secure and know who to turn to for help. Academic guidance and support are excellent. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and helpers; together they make a very effective contribution in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make outstanding progress. Parents are greatly appreciative of the success of their support. Teachers set challenging targets and pupils feel satisfied that they know what is expected of them. New methodical arrangements for marking work jointly with pupils help them recognise their success clearly. Some teachers use marking to give pupils pointers and guidance about how they can improve their work in a way that is truly exemplary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and senior team provide outstanding leadership and management which has established the caring ethos, very positive climate for learning and high achievement evident throughout the school. All staff contribute through firmly established procedures that ensure the school runs well day to day. The joint headship with a neighbouring school has been particularly beneficial, for example, by bringing experience and sharing expertise, to promote the rapid improvement in the quality of education Broomley First School provides. Under the leadership of a very experienced chair, governance is excellent. Governors' close involvement with the school means they have a first-hand view which is extended by informative reports from senior staff and they participate in evaluating its work rigorously and accurately. Together with senior leaders, they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths, plan improvements clearly and implement them successfully. They meet all their responsibilities and current government requirements to safeguard the welfare of pupils and successfully prevent discrimination. A particularly strong feature of the governors' work is their outstanding analysis of how the school can promote community cohesion. Their plan is being implemented well. Partnerships strongly enhance the community the school serves and well-laid plans show how the school will widen pupils' perspectives of the diversity of culture in Britain and worldwide.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broomley First School, Northumberland, NE43 7NN

I really enjoyed my visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping me when I came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very cooperative and I did enjoy talking with those of you whom I met. Your school gives you an excellent education and it helps you become very personable young people. You are very well behaved and polite to others in lessons and around the school. I was delighted to see how much you like to take part enthusiastically in school activities, how you value the friendships you make and the help you get. I was also pleased to see how you help others who are less fortunate than you and how you contribute to school life, for example, as school councillors. I was very impressed with your electronic presentation about healthy packed lunches. The headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school is warm, welcoming and very well organised. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy. When I looked at your books I liked the way your teachers work with you to let you know how well you are doing and how you can improve. Last year, many children in the Reception classes made exceptionally good progress. I noted that the 2008 levels in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2 were very high; this year many of you in Year 2 look like you will also do really well. I saw how pupils in Year 4 also did very well in the reading, writing and mathematics tests in 2008. I did note, though, that last year fewer pupils made as much progress in mathematics as in reading and writing and I also saw that this continues to be the picture in Year 4 at present. I was pleased to see that the extra support given to those of you struggling a little with your work helps you do really well.

I have asked the school to find as many ways as possible to help pupils in Years 3 and 4 make as much progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.

You have very many opportunities at Broomley First School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. Some of you will soon be leaving to join a middle school. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector