

Broomhill First School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 122196 |
| Local Authority | Northumberland |
| Inspection number | 327655 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 May 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Linda Buller |

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 | First |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 83 |
| 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 Ethel Fairish |
| Headteacher | Mrs Hazel Jenkins |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 March 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Station Road North Broomhill Morpeth Northumberland NE65 9UT |
| Telephone number | 01670 760339 |
| Fax number | 01670 760339 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Age group | 3–9 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 May 2009 |
| Inspection number | 327655 |

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized first school serves an area with some social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils who claim free school meals is below average. All pupils are currently from White British families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average; due to the small number of pupils in each cohort this can exceed 50% in some years. A similar proportion of pupils to those in other schools nationally have a statement of special educational need. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a number of staffing disruptions. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of Nursery and Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving and has a number of good features. Central to the school's improvement is good leadership and management. The strong leadership qualities of the headteacher drive the work of the school. She provides a clear lead in setting the direction and tone of the school. The analysis of pupils' performance is rigorous and is used well to provide timely intervention which ensures that the achievement of all pupils is at least satisfactory. The school sets challenging targets and in both key stages most pupils reach the expected levels for their age, often from below expected levels of attainment on entry to Nursery. Effective action to address identified weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills is now resulting in pupils' good progress in reading and writing, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve further. Although there are early signs of improvement, standards in mathematics are lagging behind the other core subjects. As a result, standards overall are average.

While there is some good practice across the school, teaching and curriculum provision are satisfactory overall. Lessons are carefully planned to address the mixed-age nature of the classes. However, in some lessons, pupils' work is directed too much by teachers and expectations of what pupils can do for themselves are not high enough. Consequently, pupils' ability to use their imagination or to develop their learning independently is limited. Well-briefed teaching assistants give good support to targeted groups. This is particularly effective for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and helps these pupils to make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits to reinforce learning and promote enjoyment. The school has made some successful innovative changes to the curriculum since the last inspection. However, those aimed at improving standards in mathematics are not implemented consistently. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to investigate or explore a range of strategies. This limits the breadth of their mathematical understanding and, as a result, they make satisfactory rather than good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. The school provides a nurturing environment where the pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils feel they are listened to and parents appreciate how well staff take good care of their children at all times. Effective partnerships with parents, other agencies and subject specialists enable the school to run a number of different programmes to support learning, focusing not only on academic help but also the social and emotional needs of pupils. The school has recently achieved the Healthy School award and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy school, they get on well with each other and their behaviour is good. From an early age, they begin to develop a good awareness of different cultures and beliefs and what it is that makes each one of them unique. The jobs pupils are given in school such as school councillors, buddies and play leaders are taken very seriously and pupils are keen to help others who are not as fortunate as themselves.

The school is committed to equality of opportunity and identifies quickly the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school knows that helping parents to help their children learn is a key component for raising standards, so good efforts are made to involve them in the life of the school. An audit of school provision has ensured that community cohesion is fostered effectively so that pupils are developing into caring citizens who respect and value the diversity of others both in school and the world in which they live.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The welcoming and purposeful atmosphere gives children a secure and happy start to school, which helps them to achieve well. When they start in the Nursery, children's skills are often below those typical for their age, although there is a very wide spread of ability.

Effective systems for children's welfare help them to make good progress in their personal development. Provision for children's learning and development is good. The classroom environment inside and outside is stimulating and detailed planning ensures children have a good range of imaginative activities to explore and discover for themselves. Adults skilfully interact with children in their play, developing their language and helping them to extend their thinking and ideas. Children's imagination and enthusiasm are successfully captured and work in the Reception class builds well on that started in the Nursery. Consequently, children make good progress and leave Reception with skills that are at the levels expected of children their age. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well together as a team; they observe children's development carefully and record what they see. In the main, they use this information well to plan the next steps in learning, although they do not always identify where activities will differ for children of different ability.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to carry out investigations in mathematics to increase progress and raise standards in this subject.
- Raise teachers' expectations of pupils' ability to use their imagination and develop their own independent strategies for learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will have a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. Following a decline in standards in 2007, standards in national assessments at the end of Year 2 improved in 2008 and were broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This improvement has been maintained in the current Year 2, with standards set to improve further in Key Stage 1. Many pupils in Year 1 are already working at levels beyond those expected. By the end of Year 4, standards have tended to be similar to those expected for pupils of this age, although they dipped in recent years, mainly because of the composition of different cohorts. School records show that pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are making good progress in reading and writing and are on track to reach standards that are broadly as expected for pupils aged nine. However, progress in mathematics is slower and standards are below those expected. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make good progress to meet their individual targets as a result of sensitive support which is well focused on their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils know how to keep safe and to whom they should talk if they have any problems. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They form positive relationships with adults and gain a good understanding of the world around them through the curriculum content. Pupils demonstrate a good ability to reflect on their own development, for example, when asked in assembly to consider what makes them special. They have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy through regular exercise and a significant number of pupils take part in the wide range of sporting activities and clubs. Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work are good. However, there are times when the pace of learning is slowed by the need to encourage some pupils to remain on task. Pupils contribute well to their school community. Younger pupils are quick to praise the contribution made to their safety and happiness by buddies and play leaders. Pupils are well prepared for the future by the moral and social skills that they develop and the improved progress now being made in their basic literacy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and behaviour is in the main well managed. Subject knowledge of teachers is secure and resources are used effectively to bring learning alive. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils, and they are given a good understanding of how to check for success. Teachers generally use their knowledge of pupils' ability well to set appropriate tasks; however, in some lessons they provide pupils with too much direction, limiting the pupils' ability to use their imagination or to develop their learning independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum to support pupils' personal, social and health education is well established and has done much to enhance self-esteem and promote good social behaviour. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths, including those that are not represented in the school. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced through additional activities, including visits to places of interest and after-school clubs. Changes to the curriculum to provide a whole-school structured approach to the teaching of literacy, including a daily programme for the development of pupils' knowledge and use of letters and sounds, have significantly improved the rate of pupils' progress. Although increased opportunities have been provided for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, too few opportunities exist for pupils to investigate and develop their own strategies for effective calculation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for in the safe and supportive family atmosphere created by staff. Arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils meet current requirements. Staff are strongly committed to providing effective personal care and guidance for all pupils.

Vulnerable pupils receive exceptionally good support. Teachers' use of personal targets and guidance for pupils on how to improve their work are developing well. Pupils have a good understanding of their current levels of working and what they need to do to improve. However, while targets are used well as a means of increasing the rate of pupils' progress in some lessons, this is not yet consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management have strengthened since the last inspection, mainly because the headteacher no longer has a teaching commitment and is able to give full attention to systematically reviewing pupils' performance and provision. As a result, challenging targets are set and positive action has been taken to bring about necessary improvements. This has increased the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in literacy where curriculum changes are now fully embedded across the school. Senior and subject leaders manage their responsibilities well. Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable of the school and together with the headteacher have established a stable staff team, all of whom are committed to doing the best for each pupil. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. It has carefully monitored provision and systematically planned and implemented a number of strategies to promote pupils' awareness of their own and the wider global community.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

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? | 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 | 2 |
| 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 learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

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 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**

11 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broomhill First School, Northumberland, NE65 9UT

Thank you for the kindness you showed and the help you gave to me when I inspected your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know your school and I am grateful for your thoughts and those of your parents. I would like to tell you what I found out.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. A number of things are good about the school. I agree with you and your parents that the school takes good care of you. It provides you with plenty of activities outside of lessons, especially the amount of sporting activities which help you to stay fit and healthy. You obviously enjoy school and your attendance is above average.

Your headteacher has worked very hard to improve the school and you get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of Year 4, the standards you reach are typical of nine-year-olds in reading and writing. This is because the school has successfully introduced new ways for you to learn, especially how to use your knowledge of letters and sounds. Standards in mathematics are not as high; therefore I have asked the school to provide you with more opportunities to investigate and work out your own strategies for doing calculations. Teaching is often good, especially in literacy lessons. Sometimes, however, you have too many instructions. To help you to make even better progress, I have asked your school to have higher expectations of what you can do, so you can use your imagination and develop better levels of independence in your learning.

You can help with this by always having confidence in your own ability and trying your best.

With best wishes for the future

Yours faithfully

Linda Buller

Lead inspector