

Prudhoe West First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122220
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327663
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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)	0
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	Mr Neil Paxton
Headteacher	Mr Alan Keenleyside
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Prudhoe West First School West Road Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 6HR
Telephone number	01661 832288
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most first schools and serves a community with average socio-economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a small number are at an early stage of speaking English. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive part-time provision in the Nursery and full-time provision in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because it works relentlessly to ensure excellence in teaching and learning. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation is part of the culture of the school and, due to outstanding leadership, the headteacher empowers staff to develop new initiatives and ideas. As a result, the school has improved the strengths recognised in the last inspection and continues to identify further areas for improvement. The welfare of the pupils and their personal development are exceptional because every pupil is equally valued. Throughout their time in school pupils are inspired to learn and are strongly supported to achieve their very best. Parents wholeheartedly support the school and are proud of the standards their children reach, both academically and personally. One parent, who reflects the views of many, wrote, 'My children have become confident and have good relationships with teachers. They both work well and are given work appropriate to their level – but also enough to push them.'

Standards have been maintained at a consistently high level over a number of years and pupils' achievement is outstanding. Test results for current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils indicate that standards are higher than in the previous year. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in writing in Key Stage 2. This is because the school readily embraces new approaches to learning to ensure improvements to outcomes for its pupils. The school's own data confirm that all pupils make exceptional progress from their average starting point when they enter the Nursery and most exceed the challenging targets set for them.

Pupils' learning is so successful because teachers plan lessons meticulously and use their very good subject knowledge to challenge pupils. They know each individual's level of attainment and ensure that activities match their needs. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They say they like the way teachers create games around new and difficult ideas to make learning fun. Pupils are very clear about their next step in learning because teachers guide their academic progress very well through individual discussion and helpful marking. The school rigorously tracks pupils' progress so no one is left behind. The exceptional curriculum provides a wealth of enhancements and strongly focuses on the basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and science. A thematic approach through well chosen topics ensures pupils make meaningful connections in their learning and have plenty of chances to practise their basic skills.

Leadership and management are outstanding because the headteacher uses his wide range of experience to drive the school forward and ensure its continued success. He works collaboratively with staff to create strong team work and a collegiate approach. Senior managers rigorously monitor and evaluate provision and clearly know where the school is going and what it has to do to achieve its aims. This is why achievement continues to be exceptional. Community cohesion is good, but pupils' understanding of the diversity of British society is at an early stage. The strong and knowledgeable governing body challenges the school and offers excellent support. With outcomes and provision being exceptional, value for money is excellent. This is truly an outstanding school and is well placed to continue to provide an excellent education for its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The quality of provision is outstanding. When children start Nursery they are working at the levels expected for three year olds but early literacy and numeracy skills are slightly weaker. They make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. By the time they join Year 1, the majority are above the standard expected for their age. Staff are excellent role models who work exceptionally well together as a team, providing an exciting and stimulating learning environment. Children quickly settle and thrive in the attractive surroundings. They are confident, self-reliant and outgoing. They are eager to talk about what they are doing and why. High quality planning ensures plenty of enjoyable experiences with sufficient time for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Visits and visitors further enhance learning. Children's behaviour is exemplary; they move around sensibly and pay good attention to the safety of themselves and others. They negotiate tricycles and scooters well in a relatively small outdoor space. Creative imagination is stimulated by adults who play characters in role, for example by being 'Professor Bug' the entomologist. Teachers subsequently encourage children to invent a fictional insect to write about and to paint. Learning booklets include contributions from parents and provide an informative record to share together, exemplifying the very good partnership with parents. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given extra support, sometimes with expert advice from outside agencies, so they too make very good progress. Care and welfare are exemplary because adults know and understand children's needs. Arrangements to keep them safe are rigorous and regularly reviewed. Children learn about healthy foods, understand the benefits of exercise and respect each other's views. They learn how to take responsibility, for example clearing away toys and equipment. Leadership is outstanding. The entire team constantly evaluates provision and is dedicated to ongoing improvement including the imminent construction of a new outdoor play area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils develop a better understanding of the diversity of British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are extremely high at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 due to excellent teaching and a curriculum which motivates and inspires pupils. On entry to Year 1 standards are above average in most areas. By the end of Year 2 standards are well above average and a significantly high number of pupils attain at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2008 national tests for Year 2 pupils, girls achieved better than boys and attainment in mathematics was slightly lower than in reading and writing. The school quickly addressed these issues. School data for the current Year 2 indicate that pupils are attaining higher levels than in the previous year. The gap in achievement between boys and girls has narrowed and there is no specific difference between subjects. Pupils throughout the school make exceptional progress because the school sets challenging targets. Standards at the end of Year 4 are much higher than expected for this age. Attainment in writing has improved since the last report. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because, they are nurtured well and taught through a structured programme to help them achieve. Those with English as an additional language make exceptional progress because they are very well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils are sensible, mature and responsible individuals. They show high levels of care and compassion when supporting charities. Attendance is above average and pupils show pride and enjoyment, as one pupil stated, 'We love our school because it is part of history. It is one hundred years old!' Pupils speak knowledgeably about the importance of a healthy diet. They are remarkably energetic participants in a wide range of sporting activities. The school deservedly has the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils are proud of their work and the sense of accomplishment that comes from completing challenging tasks successfully. Pupils know they are well cared for and they feel very safe in school. 'Buddies' are close at hand at playtimes should they need support. They play exceptionally well together enjoying lively games or quiet socialising equally well. The school very successfully helps pupils develop personal responsibility. They follow school routines diligently, behave impeccably in lessons and are polite and considerate towards others. Pupils contribute very effectively to their school and local community. The school and playground councils have encouraged improvements to school life and facilities. Pupils enjoy the experience of raising money through the Enterprise Fair. They have outstanding basic skills and great competence with ICT. These alongside their excellent social skills prepare them exceptionally well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils learn so successfully because teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and willingly adopt new methods to further enhance learning opportunities. Meticulous planning and the consistent approach to teaching ensures that throughout the school pupils know exactly what they are going to learn and what is expected of them. Teachers have a deep understanding of what each pupil knows and can do. Consequently the activities provided match pupils' ability and challenge their learning. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Teachers actively encourage pupils' thinking skills by careful questioning. Behaviour is exceptionally good and pupils collaborate well. Teachers encourage pupils to use a good range of interesting and new vocabulary every day by offering plenty of opportunities to discuss new ideas with a partner and with the whole class. This method supports their writing well and is one of the reasons why standards are so high. In a minority of lessons the pace of teacher input is a bit slow and pupils' concentration slackens off.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is imaginative in its approach to teaching the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. As a result pupils are inspired to learn because subjects are taught in meaningful ways that are relevant to their needs. The topic approach offers pupils a range of worthwhile opportunities to practise their skills. Pupils particularly enjoy learning through specially planned theme weeks and enrichment days because these increase their experiences and broaden their horizons. An extensive range of visits and visitors provide exciting activities that widen pupils' spiritual, cultural, scientific and technological development. Attractive art

displays adorn corridors and classrooms. Through extended services, family learning days are planned to exploit the use of the local environment as a real-life learning resource. Pupils willingly participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including those offered through very productive sports partnerships. These enhance pupils' physical development. Residential visits encourage their independence, because for many it is their first experience away from the family home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils feel well cared for because the school works hard to know every pupil as an individual. As one pupil says, 'all of our teachers care for us'. Pupils' attainment is well tracked, therefore adults understand the right level of challenge each pupil needs in order to achieve their best. Teaching assistants give first-class support to pupils who need it. The school works extremely closely with external partners and specialists to ensure that support is accurately matched to individual needs. Additional support and advice are used most successfully, especially to provide the most effective guidance for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are very well informed about their achievements because the academic guidance they receive is outstanding. They know what they have learned and what their next steps are to meet their personal learning targets. Marking is helpful and suggests ways that work can be improved. Clear and fully compliant procedures are in place with regard to child protection and health and safety. The school pays meticulous attention to detail to ensure that any risks to pupils are identified and appropriate steps taken to ensure their safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has successfully maintained high academic standards and exceptional levels of care over a number of years. The headteacher is well supported by the effective deputy and senior leadership team. Teamwork is particularly strong and all share a very strong commitment to continuous improvement. The school readily embraces new initiatives and makes sure staff are well trained to implement them. Leadership rigorously monitors all aspects of the school's work. There are regular planned opportunities for managers to share expertise, organise staff development, evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, and analyse the outcomes of assessment. As a result challenging targets are set and pupils make outstanding progress throughout the school. The school has an accurate picture of itself and the school improvement plan is well focused on the key priorities identified. The school's provision for community cohesion is good and the school evaluates its contribution effectively. It is actively involved with the local community and is developing good links with the international scene, but pupils' understanding of the diversity of British society is at an early stage. Governance is excellent. Governors are knowledgeable, loyal and have high levels of expertise. They undertake their role very seriously, diligently evaluate the work of the school and hold it to account.

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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?	1
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**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prudhoe West First School, Northumberland, NE42 6HR

Thank you so much for making Mrs Richardson, Mr Clarke and myself so welcome in your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you because you are mature and interesting people. The school and your parents must be very proud of you. Your school is an outstanding school because your teachers know every one of you so well and they make sure your lessons are fun, exciting and interesting, but they also make sure you have to think very hard. You show high levels of concentration and great enthusiasm in all you do. This is one of the reasons why your standards are so high and you are achieving so very well.

Discussions with Year 4 pupils led me to understand that you like your teachers very much and that you are very proud of your school, especially since it is an historical building. You feel very safe and can talk to anyone, including the 'buddies' if you have need. You are very compassionate. You support charities and help younger children to feel settled and comfortable in school. Many of you are gaining good enterprise skills through planned activities in school.

You have good regard for the environment and I saw many lovely plants growing in your school grounds. You have good links with the community and the activities in your school sport's hall are very popular. You are very familiar with your own area and with countries abroad. I have asked the school to extend your knowledge so you get to know more about communities in other places in Britain too.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at school. I hope you make new friends when you move to Middle School and that you continue to work very hard.

Yours faithfully

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector