

Shilbottle First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122238
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327667
Inspection dates	23–24 March 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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	99
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 Bob Wade
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Jefferies
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Shilbottle Grange Shilbottle Alnwick Northumberland NE66 2XQ
Telephone number	01665 575285
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average first school where the number of pupils has increased due to housing development within the local village. All pupils are currently of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who claim a school meal is broadly average. A similar proportion of pupils to other schools nationally are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

In this outstanding school, every individual is valued and their achievements are recognised and rewarded. Highly skilled teaching and an excellent curriculum, sharply targeted to meeting the needs of each pupil, results in pupils' outstanding achievement.

The key to the school's success is outstanding leadership and management based on the exemplary systems of monitoring and evaluation devised by the headteacher. The drive for continued improvement has led to high quality analysis of the school's performance which has ensured that all staff have the information needed to develop the full potential of each child. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate, and there is excellent capacity to improve further.

Excellent care, guidance and support for pupils underpin their exemplary personal development, including their outstanding spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils love school, attend well and appreciate all that the school provides. Excellent relationships and an ethos of care and concern ensure that pupils are self-motivated, eager to learn and have the skills needed to be good citizens. Pupils are friendly and polite. They behave very well and say they feel safe and secure in school because staff look after them very well. From an early age pupils learn about healthy foods and engage in daily physical activities. Curriculum initiatives, such as the Life Caravan, supports their in depth knowledge of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Strong partnerships with other schools and visits to places of interest contribute well to pupils' understanding of diversity in the wider community, although there is potential to extend this further.

Since the last inspection, there has been careful analysis of the progress made by pupils of different abilities and this has led to significant changes to the curriculum for the teaching of reading and writing. The school's monitoring records and evidence from pupils' work indicates that this has been very successful with many pupils, in all year groups, making much faster progress than is normally seen. As a result, standards by Year 4 are significantly above those expected for pupils of this age. This represents outstanding achievement from pupils' starting points when they enter the school.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils are fully involved in lessons and are very enthusiastic because they are given a very clear understanding of what they are required to learn. They value their teachers' expectation that they have a part to play in ensuring that their work continues to improve. Pupils' academic progress is tracked very effectively. As a result, any who are falling behind are given the support and guidance needed to quickly catch up. The marking of work is very good and celebrates good effort while suggesting how pupils can improve. Learning experiences are rich, varied and exciting. Central themes are used very effectively to combine subjects and provide pupils with opportunities to put their knowledge and skills into practise in a range of different ways.

Parents greatly value the quality of the school's provision. They appreciate how well they are kept informed and enabled to play a part in their children's education. Safeguarding procedures meet national guidelines and parents are unanimous in their belief that their children are safe and well cared for. Seeking and acting upon the views of parents and the local community are strengths of the school's good provision for community cohesion. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to explore the cultures and faiths in other countries such as India and France. There are, however, fewer opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experience of the wide variety of cultures existing in the United Kingdom.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are very well provided for and quickly settle into school life. Excellent partnerships with parents contribute to children's outstanding achievement. Children enter school with knowledge and skills broadly typical for their age. By the time they complete their Reception Year, the vast majority have reached a good level of development with knowledge and skills overall above average. Provision for children's learning and development is outstanding. Planning is meticulous. It clearly identifies the role of all staff members in supporting each child in taking the next steps in their learning. Children's progress is monitored thoroughly through high quality observations. The learning environment is exciting and stimulating, reflecting children's interests, through stimulating themes and activities. For example, the recent visit to a local farm inspires children to replicate the names of the lambs making excellent use of their knowledge of letters and sounds. They develop simple calculation and problem-solving skills assisted by high quality intervention by staff and a wide range of interesting resources. Children's personal development is outstanding; they enjoy all of their activities and are well behaved and sociable, independent learners. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere in which young children thrive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more first-hand opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultural diversity that exists nationally.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

All the adults in school devote their attention successfully to meeting individual needs. Consequently, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve exceptionally well often making excellent progress from their various starting points. Children enter the Reception class with a wide range of skills and abilities that are typical of those usually expected and progress consistently well to the end of Year 2. The introduction of a systematic approach to teaching reading and writing skills and the provision of excellent opportunities for extended writing and problem solving in mathematics have ensured that standards in the present Year 2 are already above average. Progress accelerates throughout Key Stage 2, so that by the end of Year 4 standards are significantly above those expected for pupils of this age in English and mathematics, with approximately half of all pupils already attaining the level expected of pupils in Year 6. This is due to extremely challenging targets and the effective teaching of core skills, so that the pace of learning does not slow down for any group of pupils whatever their prior attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance is good. Pupils know that their views are listened to and that they have a voice in the school. Consequently, their personal development is excellent. They understand very well what it means to have a healthy lifestyle, fully justifying the Healthy School Award. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. They

clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and how important it is to get along with each other. Consequently, behaviour is outstanding and relationships are excellent. Pupils report that they feel safe and that any concerns they have are well managed and quickly dealt with. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the school community through the school council, and as play leaders. They have a very good understanding of their cultural heritage as a result of excellent first-hand experiences to places of interest and opportunities to be fully involved in their local community. Although a variety of faiths, cultures and traditions are explored through curriculum opportunities in geography and religious education, pupils' understanding of the diversity of modern Britain could be developed further. High standards in basic skills and a love of learning prepares pupils exceptionally well for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic learners because they find lessons exciting and interesting. One pupil said that they thought their teachers were the 'best thing in the school'. Teachers know their pupils very well and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and varied activities engage pupils' interest so they enjoy learning and work hard. Teachers use their excellent assessment of how well pupils are doing to target perceptive questions to individuals which challenge their thinking. Explanations are clear, consequently, pupils know what is expected of them ensuring they work hard and always aim to succeed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is fully inclusive and fully supports the exemplary personal and academic achievement of pupils. Key to this success meticulously detailed planning which takes into account the different levels of ability of all pupils and carefully plans for their next steps in learning. A strong focus on developing reading, writing, thinking and problem-solving skills ensures pupils are well equipped for their move to middle school. Curriculum enrichment is excellent. An exciting and extensive range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities adds greatly to pupils' levels of interest. Pupils benefit from a wide range of physical activity, opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument, to speak a modern foreign language and to learn how to care for the environment through the excellent development of the school garden.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care includes safeguarding procedures which follow national guidelines. Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to the care of pupils in their charge. The nurturing atmosphere in the school results in pupils feeling safe and valued. Excellent support is provided for those who find learning difficult through early identification of their needs and good partnerships which are established with other agencies. Academic guidance is very effective. Key strengths include excellent use of information to provide support where it is most needed and in setting pupils' individual targets. High quality feedback to pupils provides them with a

secure knowledge of how well they are doing and involves them fully in aiming for further improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Central to the school's success is the outstanding quality of the leadership and management at all levels. There is no complacency. Rigorous analysis of data, which is a model of good practice, ensures that provision is adjusted quickly to meet the needs of each individual pupil and that standards continue to improve year-on-year. The school expects high standards and consistently exceeds its challenging targets.

Self-evaluation is excellent. The headteacher has a precise picture of how this already outstanding school can continue to improve further. Outstanding teamwork ensures that this is translated into a shared vision and that all resources are used to the maximum benefit for pupils. Governance is excellent. Governors support the school very well but are not afraid to ask probing questions about any initiative that is introduced. The school is in an excellent position to further 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?	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?	2
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	2
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

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shilbottle First School, Northumberland, NE66 2XQ

Thank you for making me so welcome on my recent visit to your school. You have a lovely school, in a beautiful setting. I agree with your teachers that your school is an outstanding one. I can understand why you are so proud of your school as there are many things that make it special. Your excellent behaviour and the way you all try hard in lessons are helping you to reach high standards. The Reception children are doing extremely well and are very good at learning their letter sounds. This is helping them to learn to read and write very well.

Your teachers make a good team and provide you with lessons which are fun and exciting. Your headteacher works very hard to find out exactly how well each of you is doing. This helps to ensure that you are all given every opportunity to do as well as you can.

Your knowledge of your local area was very impressive and you told me how much you enjoy the visits which you make to find out even more. The one thing that I have asked the school to do to improve is to provide you with the same good first- hand opportunities to learn about the different ethnic groups of people that live in Britain today.

You can help by being curious to learn about other people who live in our country.

I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Linda Buller

Lead inspector