

Chollerton Church of England Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122272
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327679
Inspection date	3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	29
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 Patricia Simpson
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Wildsmith
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Barrasford Hexham Northumberland NE48 4AA

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	3 July 2009
Inspection number	327679

Telephone number

01434 681572

Fax number

01434 681572

Age group 4–9

Inspection date 3 July 2009

Inspection number 327679

© 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 two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school, where all of the pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage, which consists of one 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. Since the last inspection, the excellent leadership team of headteacher, staff and governors has maintained exceptionally high standards and achievement, both academically and personally. This has been achieved by the provision of outstanding teaching and learning, very high standards of care, guidance and support and a rich, vibrant curriculum, well matched to pupils' needs and interests. The school is highly popular with parents and carers and attracts several families from outside its catchment area. Parents commented on the school's 'sense of community', 'its helpful and caring headteacher and staff,' 'the outstanding progress pupils make' and 'the care and support given to families with particular needs.' As one parent writes: 'This school offers a full and rounded education, laying strong foundations for the next step in children's educational journey.'

When children begin Reception their skills are broadly typical for this age group. The majority make very good progress each year. When they leave Year 4, they reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science and this represents outstanding achievement. They are also confident learners, with highly positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is excellent; they are courteous, sociable and highly cooperative. They are very knowledgeable about the essential features of a healthy lifestyle: they drink water and make healthy food choices; they participate in a wide range of physical activities and have access to plenty of space and equipment during breaks. The Activemark Award acknowledges the school's success in this. Their involvement in the locality, including inter-school and church events, develops their understanding of community and diversity, while their fundraising for world charities helps them appreciate global interdependence. The school stresses the importance of caring for each other and pupils feel they are part of a large family.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Staff have an excellent knowledge of their pupils as individuals and work exceptionally well together to provide a progressive education, which meets pupils' needs personally and academically. Staff are exceptionally well trained, particularly in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are very accurate in their assessment of pupils' abilities and use this knowledge to extend the learning of all pupils. Marking is completed diligently and often includes advice to aid improvement, particularly in English, but sometimes opportunities to guide pupils to higher standards are missed in other subjects. Pupils rarely improve their work by drafting or correction, following comments in marking.

The outstanding curriculum includes stimulating topics. For example, looking at other faiths and cultures included Islam, Judaism and India and widened pupils' outlook, while special events such as a visit by Tashi Lumpo Monks promote understanding of diversity. Basic skills are taught very well and used imaginatively across the curriculum. The school does all it can to make pupils feel happy, safe and secure. It meets all statutory requirements and keeps all aspects of school life, including risk assessments and staff training, under regular review. Staff monitor pupils' progress on a daily basis and ensure they receive appropriate support towards targets.

This is a very well run school with smooth, well established procedures in place. There are high expectations of pupils in their work and in their behaviour. The headteacher is extremely hard working and staff and governors share her vision for pupils to achieve as highly as possible. The leadership team have made excellent progress since the last inspection. They have sustained and enhanced outstanding achievement so that most pupils make excellent progress compared

with their starting points. They promote excellent standards in welfare. They have strengthened the school's work with partnerships and promoted community cohesion well. Their self-evaluation is accurate, if rather modest. The school is currently providing outstanding value for money and has excellent capacity to make further progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children begin Reception, although there are several with speech problems, skills are typical for this age group. However, because of the very small numbers involved this does vary widely. Due to very effective provision during the year, most exceed the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals and enter Year 1 with above average standards. This excellent achievement is due to outstanding teaching, which successfully promotes learning using a well balanced curriculum of teacher-led and child-initiated learning, both indoors and out. Staff work very well together. Planning is rigorous with clear progression and consolidation, while assessment is detailed and accurate. Staff are good listeners and extend children's ideas imaginatively. They are very skilful at getting children to interact and learn from each other. Very high standards of welfare are promoted, with daily checks of area and equipment. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe; on the road, when using equipment, and during specific weather conditions. There are excellent procedures in place, including those for hand washing and movement about the building. Personal, social and emotional education is given successful priority from entry and children make outstanding progress because they are taught how to play together, how to care and how to share. Staff model courtesy well and consistently; children copy and are given praise. Leadership and management are outstanding: there is effective liaison with the pre-school and well organised induction for new admissions; effective partnerships are established with parents; children settle well because of the warm, supportive atmosphere; and an effective staff team provide high quality care and education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure constructive marking is consistently used across the curriculum and pupils have opportunities to improve their work following marking guidance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When pupils enter Year 1, their standards are above average. The progress of most pupils to the end of Year 4 is outstanding because of excellent teaching and learning, a highly effective curriculum and exemplary care, guidance and support. As a result, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and leave with exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 4. Results in national tests have been significantly high in all subjects since 2004, although writing was not as high as reading and mathematics in 2008. Since then the school has focused on writing using many initiatives to raise standards. As a result, pupils write very confidently and extensively for many purposes, using interesting content and a wider range of structural and stylistic techniques. Improved clarity of explanation is also evident in science and other practical work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because of the care and attention they receive from staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent relationships and respect for others are in evidence throughout the school. As pupils say; 'We help each other and if someone falls over, we take them in and get a plaster.' Pupils' social interactions in the playground are exemplary and behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils are very friendly and exceptionally polite. They really enjoy school and this is shown in their above average attendance. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and know how to keep themselves fit, safe and happy. They appreciate that staff are very vigilant and incidents of bullying are nonexistent. They enjoy supporting and playing with younger pupils at break-times. Pupils' understanding of diversity is enhanced by community projects with the church and the village. This includes participation in the oral histories project, work with local business employers, links with a city school and charity fundraising, such as the sponsored walk for Water Aid. Transition to middle school is well organised and pupils leave as confident and cooperative learners, with highly effective basic skills and a wide range of personal and educational experiences.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Staff's aspirations for pupils are very high and as a result pupils meet high targets and make excellent progress. Staff have very good subject knowledge and use resources imaginatively. Lessons are carefully planned to match individual needs and interests so that all pupils respond well and sustain concentration. Improvement in writing has been particularly successful because pupils read a wide range of good quality literature, are successfully helped to appreciate writing techniques and are given plenty of opportunities to practise writing across the curriculum. Pupils' progress is tracked extremely closely and because of very good oral feedback pupils know their successes and areas for development. Marking is generally very constructive, particularly in English, but sometimes opportunities to direct pupils to higher achievement in other subject areas are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is continually revised in response to individual and group requirements but is always exciting, balanced and relevant. It is extremely well structured with a most effective approach to teaching basic skills. This is especially beneficial for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensures that they receive appropriate intervention programmes and effective support from outside agencies. The more able, gifted and talented pupils receive appropriate challenge during lessons and additional provision. Four Basic Skills Quality awards recognise this quality provision. Pupils study in depth topics, appropriately enhanced by visits and visitors. There are creative whole school projects such as art days, singing workshops and theatre visits. Specialist tuition is provided for sport and pupils have experienced football, tag rugby, tennis and badminton. All pupils have the opportunity to learn the ukulele, while out-of-school clubs offer activities as diverse as Christmas crafts and Popmobility. Church of England events in Hexham Abbey and Newcastle Cathedral contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support, both personally and academically. It meets all statutory requirements and there are rigorous systems in place for safeguarding, child protection and risk assessments. These are regularly reviewed and appropriately updated. Staff are well trained in first aid and general health and safety. Pupils are well taught how to keep themselves healthy, safe and happy. Parents comment on staff encouragement for their children and how it raises their self-esteem. Academic guidance is very successful because staff ratios are good and all staff know children very well. Staff keep parents informed of curricular coverage so that they can support learning. Tracking of pupils' progress is accurate and used efficiently and regularly to identify individual needs, targets and the success of teaching programmes. As one parent comments, 'Each child is treated as an individual and this is reflected in the teaching plans, which meet all children's needs.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The headteacher has a clear vision for whole child development and sets a very clear direction to raise achievement, both personally and academically. She is ably supported by highly trained and highly competent staff, who have worked together successfully for many years. As a result, there is smooth transition between classes, consistency of approach and progression in the curriculum. All staff help each other, morale is high and parents are welcomed as educational partners. Pupils thrive in this warm, family ethos; their welfare is promoted effectively and they reach high levels of achievement. Governance is outstanding. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and are active within it. Their roles are clearly defined, their monitoring is thorough and focused and they contribute very effectively to the school's self evaluation. Together, headteacher, staff and governors have worked successfully to provide a high quality education. They have also developed the school's standing in the locality and successfully promoted good community cohesion by working with schools in socially diverse areas, the church, local groups and local industries. They intend extending these links to schools abroad in the coming year.

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?	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**

4 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chollerton Church of England Aided First School, Northumberland, NE48 4AA

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. You were most helpful and courteous and expressed your views very clearly and confidently. Please thank your parents on my behalf. It was very interesting to read their comments.

You attend an outstanding school and most of you make excellent progress, both personally and academically. When you enter Reception your skills are typical of the age group but when you leave Year 4, you have achieved exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. This success has resulted from excellent teaching and learning, exciting lessons and projects, which capture your interests and meet your needs and very high standards of care. The staff do everything they can to make you feel healthy, safe and happy. They also track your progress well to make sure you understand and remember. If you do have problems you get help quickly and the right sort of help for success. The staff give you lots of encouragement and make learning fun. Your headteacher, staff and governors work very well as a team. They have been very successful in ensuring you receive a high quality education so that when you go to middle school you leave with good work attitudes, very effective basic skills and a wide range of curricular experiences on which to draw. I have asked your school to do one thing to make you even more successful. I have asked it to:

- ensure the excellent marking you receive in some subjects is used in all others and that you have opportunities to improve your work following your teachers' guidance. In other words, go back, correct or redraft your original work. In that way, you'll learn and remember more.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are very keen to make further progress.

Have an enjoyable summer holiday and please return, refreshed. I send my best wishes to you and your families.

Yours faithfully

Joan Elton

Lead inspector