

Greenhead Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122284
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327684
Inspection date	23 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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)	33
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	11
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Sharp
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Dwyer
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greenhead Brampton Cumbria CA8 7HB
Telephone number	01697 747347
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school. Pupils are admitted from three small villages; some come from a small nearby town. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises one Reception Class. Since 2006, the headteacher has been the non-teaching head of this and another local school through a confederated arrangement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and has several outstanding features. Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. The school provides pupils with outstanding care, guidance and support. It is founded on Christian values. 'Greenhead is a lovely school and I feel very fortunate my children attend it' is a typical comment that reflects the high regard for the school held by most parents.

In their time at school, pupils become responsible, courteous citizens. They are proud of their school and keen to tell visitors about it. Pupils show they value being healthy and staying fit by very enthusiastically taking part in daily exercise. They feel very safe and settled because the school provides them with excellent care, support and guidance. Their behaviour is outstanding and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy the many stimulating learning experiences that are enriched by visiting experts and the excellent partnerships with other small schools. Pupils play a full part in their own school, as well as supporting their local community and the group of West Tyne Church schools where they make many friends before transferring to middle school. With the good progress made in key skills pupils are well prepared to cope with life ahead.

Achievement is good overall. Small numbers leads to variation in standards from year to year, but overall, they are above average in Year 2 and Year 4 and progress is good. Gains in reading, mathematics and science are much more rapid than in writing. Standards in writing are average. Although pupils acquire technical writing skills they are less skilful at writing longer pieces of work and not enough attention is given to the quality of handwriting and presentation. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar good progress to other pupils.

Teaching is good. Pupils are challenged well and make speedy gains in most subjects. Lively lessons, good use of outdoor learning and practical tasks keeps them engaged and attentive. However, there is not always enough demand made of pupils to improve their presentations skills. The curriculum is good. It has improved through more creative approaches to planning that makes learning more interesting. Assessment practices are diligently administered. The school's tracking system provides a very clear picture of each pupil's progress and the information is used well to promote good achievement.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher sets clear direction and is very successful in promoting the family ethos that permeates this small school. Staff contribute well to the good monitoring that leads to an accurate audit and clear development plan with relevant priorities. Governors provide good support. Their monitoring role is properly developed and they hold school leaders to account well. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children's personal development and the promotion of their welfare are outstanding. Although starting points are variable most children start school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age although they are sometimes lower in reading and writing and aspects of mathematics. Children are happy, settled, friendly and play together very well. Some children enthusiastically organised baking equipment and decorated birthday cakes while others managed the Reception class 'Garden Centre' confidently. Children behave very well,

follow instructions carefully and are eager to take part in the enticing range of activities that are either led by adults or chosen for themselves.

Teaching is good and focuses well on key skills, such as phonics and counting numbers. Teaching skilfully provides many of the starting points for children to pursue independent learning, a particular strength many children possess. For example, the theme of a story told to the children by an adult was developed very well outdoors when children followed the school nature garden pathways to hunt for the bear that featured in the story. Adults, providing diligent supervision, skilfully withdrew to allow children to explore independently. Thrilled to find the bear, children then found other secret locations where he could be hidden. These fun based activities contribute to most children reaching average standards and some exceeding this level by the end of Reception. Aspects of literacy and number are not always as high as other areas of learning but nevertheless, all make good progress from their individual starting points. Leadership, shared by the Early Years Foundation Stage team is good. Through good teamwork, the indoor learning opportunities and assessment practices have been improved to match revised requirements. Leaders are ambitious for further success and are developing good transition arrangements with staff from the pre-school facility.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing for pupils of all abilities ensuring they have regular opportunities to write at length independently.
- Raise expectations of the standard of presentation in pupils' work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From Years 1 to 4, all pupils make equally good progress from their individual starting points. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 fluctuate because of the small numbers involved. However, the pattern over recent years has been broadly average and slightly higher in writing and mathematics.

Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. In Year 4 standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science and average in writing. Good progress has been made in providing pupils with the technical writing skills such as writing factual notes, completing tables and learning to use paragraphs. However, these skills are not always applied well to all work because pupils do not have enough opportunity to work independently on longer pieces of writing. Standards of presentation, including handwriting, are not as good as expected for the pupils' age. This is apparent in exercise books for several subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they benefit from the input of skilled assistants who provide sensitive and timely personal support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love school and attend well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely polite and helpful and show considerable care for each other. They are very aware of not only the religious aspect of spirituality but also of the natural world, and their place in this relatively small school community. Pupils are very aware of other faiths and cultures and are tolerant of others' opinion and beliefs. Their behaviour is excellent, partly

because they have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and understand how their actions can affect others. Pupils say they feel very safe at school knowing they can turn to a friendly adult who knows them personally. They are also very knowledgeable about the benefits of staying healthy and keeping fit and enthusiastically engage in regular vigorous exercise.

Through their very influential school council pupils have a real voice in the development of the school. They contribute very well to events in the church calendar and the local area. For example, pupils designed banners to celebrate the restoration of a local castle. They enjoy learning in partnership with their classroom friends from neighbouring small schools. Given their good achievement in key skills pupils are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. High expectations of learning and behaviour, warm relationships and a variety of approaches are key features in lessons. A further strength is teachers' knowledge of pupils' individual needs. This is used effectively to prepare learning activities that match pupils' individual needs. Well organised practical lessons are popular with pupils. For example, in mathematics, pupils learned successfully about the concept of remainders because teaching planned this as a highly practical experience. Science exercise books reveal pupils enjoy investigation, as in handling a diverse range of fabrics to test out their resistance to stretching.

Teachers' expectation of the way pupils present their work is not always high enough. Although marking reminds pupils of the importance of neat and tidy work this advice is not always followed up with sufficient rigour or insistence to raise pupils' skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered with an emphasis on teaching basic skills. Numeracy and reading are developed well in other subjects. Writing is also encouraged but with insufficient emphasis on writing at length. Subject specialists, engaged through excellent school partnerships, add considerably to provision. Further enhancement comes through visits, learning outdoors and by accessing external facilities. Provision includes appealing humanities activities, a strong emphasis on creative subjects and excellent personal and social learning. Taken together, the curriculum activities add noticeably to pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils are eager to take part in many appealing extra-curricular activities that include sport, music, cookery and gardening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Child protection, risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. A parent attributed the success of her child settling rapidly into school to the 'high levels of care and organisation' that reflects the excellent attention given to pupils.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Staff know the pupils individually and intervention is timely and purposeful. Professional links with the staff

of external agencies enhance provision. Close links with staff in the middle school ensure pupils transfer smoothly to their next stage of education.

Academic guidance is of good quality. Information is used well to track progress and offer support where it is most needed. Assessment information is taken into consideration when planning lessons that are carefully tailored to individual needs. Pupils receive very helpful guidance during lessons, being reminded regularly about the objectives they are working towards. Pupils have individual targets which are pasted to the back of their desk lid as a reminder about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is supported well by a dedicated staff and there is a good sense of teamwork. Important outcomes of this good leadership are that all pupils achieve well. Leaders have had particular success in improving pupils' personal development and their care, guidance and support. These are now outstanding aspects of the school. The curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage provision have also improved. Leaders set challenging targets that are met, reflecting the pupils' good progress. Their influence in raising standards is better in reading and mathematics than writing. Writing was a concern raised in the previous inspection and although attention has been given to improving pupils' technical writing skills more remains to be done to raise overall standards in writing. Nevertheless, the overall improvement since the previous inspection is good and there is good capacity for further improvement.

Governance is good. Governors benefit from the excellent partnership work with other West Tyne schools and take part in focused visits through reciprocal arrangements. This 'external view' helps them to play a full part in the school's self-evaluation process. This contributes to the school having an accurate if slightly modest, picture of provision. The school's work in promoting community cohesion is good. This is a welcoming and inclusive school. Careful evaluation of the school in its mono-cultural setting has led to effective action to ensure pupils contribute to their school community, mix regularly with pupils in other nearby schools and visit city events to develop an understanding of diversity in modern Britain and an awareness of global issues.

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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?	2
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	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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	2

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?	2
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?	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**

24 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenhead Church of England First School, Northumberland, CA8 7HB

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school. You were friendly and courteous; thank you for helping us. We enjoyed meeting you, looking at your work and talking to you. We were impressed by your friendly conversation, outstanding behaviour and good attendance.

These are the things we found out about your school during our visit. You attend a good school. All the people who work in school are doing a good job. Your personal development is outstanding. You told us how much you value being fit and healthy. We know you feel safe and know how to get help. The staff provide you with outstanding care. They organise individual support for those of you who need extra help quickly. You receive very good guidance on how to improve your work and clear targets to work towards. We know that you enjoy the stimulating activities in lessons, the opportunities to learn with experts, the visits to interesting places and learning with your friends in other local schools.

Teaching is good and lessons are interesting and challenging. Consequently, you make good progress throughout the school. By Year 4 most of you have reached above average standards. Well done! There are two things the school could help you to do better.

- Ensure you all make quicker progress in writing. We have suggested the teachers provide you with time to write longer pieces of work based on your own ideas.
- Improve your presentation and handwriting skills. You can do something about this by working hard and doing the best you can for your teachers.

We wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Sleightholme and Gordon Potter

Inspectors