

Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 122297 |
| Local Authority | Northumberland |
| Inspection number | 327690 |
| Inspection dates | 29–30 April 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Barbara Hudson |

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.

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| Type of school | First |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 188 |
| 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 | Rev Robert McLean |
| Headteacher | Mrs Dickinson, Mr Tim Jones (Acting headteacher) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 March 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Pinewood Drive Lancaster Park Morpeth Northumberland NE61 3RD |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 3–9 |
| Inspection dates | 29–30 April 2009 |
| Inspection number | 327690 |

Telephone number
Fax number

01670 512803
01670 505767

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties/or disabilities is also well below average. Most children are White British. A small number of pupils are from other backgrounds and a few are learning English as an additional language. There has been a two-year period of serious disruption to the senior leadership team during which time there have been several acting headteachers. This situation has not yet been resolved. A Nursery and Reception class forms the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The staff, governors and local authority have worked diligently to ensure that the school has moved forward despite significant disruption to the senior leadership team. Parents have correctly identified this as a concern and many have praised the staff for 'working tirelessly to ensure minimum disruption to the daily lives of the children' and the inspectors agree with this comment.

Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard. One pupil's comment 'When you wake up in the morning you want to come to school' summed up the enthusiasm that many pupils have for school. Pupils behave very well, their attendance is good and they feel safe and secure. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community and their skills particularly in literacy and numeracy help them to be very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Achievement is satisfactory overall because progress varies between key stages. Also, fewer more able pupils are attaining the higher standards of which they are capable because the work they are given to do is too easy. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 and 4, progress is satisfactory so standards are maintained at the same level. Nearly all the pupils attain the standards that are expected for their age and some exceed them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily because the additional support given is not frequent enough for them to make faster progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and expect them to behave well. Lessons are mostly well planned. The activities planned for the more able pupils, however, are insufficiently challenging. Although satisfactory overall, target-setting and marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and this at times hinders pupils' progress. The curriculum is satisfactory with a good range of after-school clubs. Visits and visitors enrich the learning experiences for the pupils. Community cohesion is satisfactorily provided for. Pupils have many opportunities to work and play together and learn about different communities. The school provides satisfactory levels of care and guidance. All policies and procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety.

It is a credit to the acting headteacher, staff, governors and local authority that the leadership and management are satisfactory. The various acting headteachers that have been employed during the last two years have brought a range of skills to the school. This has meant that the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Currently leadership is very efficient and effective although temporary. The staff, governors and local authority have a good understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses. The governors are working with the local authority to resolve the current leadership and management situation as soon as possible. Financial management is secure. An area that has been affected during this difficult time is the limited monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work, in particular around the marking of pupils' work and the target-setting. This has contributed to the decline in the number of more able pupils achieving highly. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Most children start the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Achievement overall is satisfactory. Although some groups make good progress, the more able and some children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. By the end of the Reception Year children's attainment is at a level typical for their ages although some attain more highly. Children are well settled, safe and secure. Children's personal development is good because they are learning to play, work and share together. Too much time is spent on group activities because the balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities is not yet appropriate. The location, size and shape of the outdoor provision are awkward and contribute to the lack of opportunities for large scale physical and creative development outdoors. Welfare is promoted satisfactorily and meets requirements. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recent restructuring of the Nursery and Reception classes has resulted in considerable change. The staff, in conjunction with the local authority, have ensured the school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is still a way to go but the local authority's advice and recommendations are carried out and there is a desire to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the headship of the school remains stable.
- Increase the level of challenge for the more able pupils.
- Raise the quality and the teachers' accountability for their marking of pupils work and improve target-setting so that all pupils know what they do well and how to improve.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

During their time in school pupils make satisfactory progress overall. At the start of Year 1, pupils are in line with the national averages. During their time in Key Stage 1 they make good progress so that by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress and those high standards are maintained but do not increase further for certain groups of pupils. Standards are above those typically expected of pupils' ages at the end of Year 4 but the more able pupils make only satisfactory progress rather than good progress, particularly in mathematics. This means they are not achieving their full potential. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because extra support is not sufficient or often enough to hasten their progress more.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that pupils are happy, confident and their attendance is good. Pupils get along with each other and respect other faiths and cultures. Pupils have positive

attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. They say that lessons can be fun but sometimes the work is too easy, particularly in mathematics. They have a secure understanding of how to stay healthy and fit although the contents of some pupils' lunchboxes do not always reflect this. Pupils know how to stay safe and they are confident that any problems, including bullying, will be quickly dealt with. Pupils take some responsibilities such as monitors and playground buddies. The school councillors know that their views are listened to. Pupils' develop good skills in teamwork, literacy and numeracy and this prepares them well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Strengths are that teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond well. Relationships are good between adults and pupils and this leads to a calm, purposeful working environment. Lessons are well planned and most pupils are set sufficiently challenging work to complete. The work for the more able pupils is often too easy. In many lessons teachers use interactive whiteboards well to help pupils understand what they have to do and this helps them to complete their task in the time available. The marking of pupils' work and the use of targets to help pupils improve their work is inconsistent and contributes to reducing the speed of pupils' progress. Marking is better for the work pupils do in extended writing. In this teachers inform pupils what they do well and where they need to improve. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets national requirements. Sufficient emphasis is given to the development of basic skills of literacy and numeracy but pupils do not use information and communication technology (ICT) often enough. A recent revision of the curriculum to meet the changes in class organisation has resulted in relevant links across subjects so that pupils' learning is more meaningful. The changes also reflect the school's acquisition of the nationally recognised Healthy School Award, Activemark and Artsmark Gold. Provision for pupils' personal and social skills is well established and reflects the Christian values the school promotes. The curriculum responds appropriately to the needs of most pupils but it is not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. Pupils and parents express their satisfaction with a good range of after-school clubs. These include a variety of sports, drama and music activities. Pupils benefit from the good use of visits out of school and well informed, experienced visitors to the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The arrangements for health and safety including child protection meet requirements and ensure pupils are safeguarded. The school is encouraging pupils to understand the importance of arriving promptly to start the day and is trying to ensure that a small minority of persistent absentees attend more regularly. Holidays taken in term time adversely affect the overall attendance figures. Pupils know their targets for writing and have found them useful. They are less sure about what they need to do next to improve in other subjects and do not always find marking helps them to do so. Marking and target-setting

are not consistent throughout the school. A tracking system keeps records of progress but this process is not rigorous enough. There are opportunities through open evenings and newsletters to learn about the work of the school, but a number of parents feel they are not as well informed as they would like to be about how well their child is progressing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. During a difficult time the staff, governors and local authority are working well together to ensure that the school continues to make satisfactory progress or better. The current acting headteacher and staff have made a positive contribution to ensuring that the school functions well day-to-day and there has been as little disruption as possible to the pupils. This reflects the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to their learning. The acting headteacher has used the school's accurate self-evaluation to formulate a very clear way forward. As a result teachers are more aware and accountable for the progress pupils make in their class and the need to redress the decline in standards and achievement for the more able pupils. The monitoring of pupils work has been limited and this has resulted in the inconsistencies in marking and target-setting. School improvement planning is satisfactory although actions are not rigorously evaluated against the outcomes for the pupils. Subject leadership is better developed in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. The school effectively promotes respect and harmony between pupils of different backgrounds and is beginning to evaluate its work. Governors have competently managed many difficult situations. They are working hard to ensure that the current leadership and management situation is resolved. They are not proactive enough in evaluating the work of the school and this is why governance overall is satisfactory. Financial management is secure.

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

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| 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

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| 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? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 3 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

31 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First School, Northumberland, NE61 3RD

Thank you for making my colleague and I so welcome when we inspected your school. We were delighted with the polite, helpful and friendly way in which you helped us to enjoy our visit. You answered our questions well and we were very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school because you want to learn and the staff and pupils are very friendly.

I would like to tell you about the good things we found during our visit. We very quickly found out that you enjoy coming to school to learn and to see your friends. We then found out that the work that you do is of a well above average standard and you behave very well. We also found out that all the grown-ups take good care of you and this helps you to become responsible, confident young people.

Overall the school provides you with a satisfactory education. We found some areas where the school can make some improvements. We have asked the staff to make sure you all have work to do that is not too easy and not too hard. Also to make sure that marking and the setting of targets as used in your extended writing works just as well in other subjects. This is to help you know what you do well and how you can improve your work. We have asked your governors to make sure that you do not have too many more changes of headteacher.

We enjoyed talking to you, your teachers and all the other adults in your school, as well as watching you learning in the lessons that we saw. We wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Hudson

Lead inspector