

Tritlington Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122299
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327691
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	57
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 Anne Petrie
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Donaldson
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tritlington Morpeth Northumberland NE61 3DU
Telephone number	01670 787383
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural First School serves not only the village but also outlying areas. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are from White-British backgrounds. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: Nursery and Reception, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. The number of pupils in each year group is often fewer than 10.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tritlington Church of England First School is a good and improving school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, especially pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the curriculum. Parents are right to value the education their children are getting. A typical comment being, 'Staff go above and beyond to accommodate children's needs. Our child has always been happy at Tritlington School and we consider that we are very fortunate'. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is excellent; they have positive attitudes and enjoy learning, demonstrated by their good attendance. The skills and confidence that pupils develop ensure that they are well prepared for later life. The school gives good value for money.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Children settle quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery and Reception class and make good progress. They enter Year 1 at an above average level. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and sustain above average standards at the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 4 are above the levels expected for pupils of this age. However, due to small year groups, there can be some variation from year to year. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported extremely well, often by skilled teaching assistants. This accounts for their good achievement.

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is carefully planned so that it meets their needs well. Excellent links with other schools and agencies, as well as the local community, bring substantial benefits to pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils participate in the school council and develop an excellent awareness of taking responsibility in the school and wider communities. Pupils are well prepared for their middle schooling. Links with schools in the area are well established.

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are sometimes outstanding. Pupils make good progress. The school has a lively, stimulating environment, which encourages pupils to learn while enjoying themselves. However, work is not always challenging enough for the more able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning; they are well trained and are fully integrated with the staff team. The manner in which the curriculum successfully links subjects together promotes a high level of understanding and enjoyment. Changes to the curriculum successfully allow pupils to use knowledge and skills throughout their cross curricular work. Teachers plan so that these can be threaded through a wide range of issues, often linked with the local area.

Good leadership, particularly that of the headteacher, has been essential to the improvements needed in the school and demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve. The headteacher has accurately identified what the school does well and where improvement is most needed. The progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked but as yet this is not detailed enough to ensure that pupils always receive provision precisely matched to their needs. Governors provide good guidance and keep a good balance between offering support to the school and challenging it to do even better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children quickly settle into routines because of the high quality care and support they receive, as well as the excellent

partnerships with parents. Children's love of learning begins at this early stage when they are well nurtured and cared for in a safe environment.

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge similar to those expected for their age; calculating skills are not usually as well developed as other areas, such as dispositions and attitudes, where skills are particularly well developed. When they enter Year 1, most children have made good progress and have reached an above average level. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, ensuring that planning reflects an understanding of how young children learn most effectively.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent; they behave very well and are keen to learn. Children gain very good social skills as they interact with one another and develop increasing levels of independence. Children have opportunities to make music with bells and to listen and talk to each other as they select and count plants for their window boxes or explore early stages of writing. Children are well taught and good use is made of assessment in helping identify what children need to do next. The indoor and outdoor areas are well planned with a range of activities that consolidate early learning. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because early assessment highlights their needs and good teaching assistant support is provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place greater emphasis on the challenge for more able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, to ensure that their work always matches their ability.
- Ensure that tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous so that there is clear identification of improved provision to match pupils' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In such a small school, pupils' performance compared with national averages tends to fluctuate from year to year. Overall, however, achievement is good and standards are above average. By the time children leave Reception and enter Year 1, standards are above average. Good progress in Key Stage 1 maintains the above average standards by the end of Year 2. Brisk progress continues, resulting in above and sometimes well above expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 4. This is particularly evident in reading and writing where standards have been improving over the last two years. Internal assessments and inspection evidence indicate that Year 2 pupils are well placed to attain above average standards this year and Year 4 pupils to exceed expected levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make very good progress towards their learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and plays an important part in their good academic progress and achievement. Pupils behave exceptionally well and greatly enjoy all school activities. They appreciate the friendships and 'family atmosphere' of the school, which is reflected in their good attendance. This is a very happy school where pupils genuinely care for each other. They say they feel safe and secure and that adults care for them and will always help them. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is first-rate. From an early age, pupils learn how to eat healthily and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in fitness

activities. Years 3 and 4 pupils take on responsibilities, for example helping the younger ones. The school makes an excellent contribution to the widespread local community. Pupils say how much they enjoy performing in church, raising funds to support others and listening and talking to the many local people they invite into their school. The school council knows it has a real voice in school and has been actively involved in planning for pupils' outdoor learning. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Progress is good because teaching is good. Sometimes it is outstanding. A positive feature of all lessons is the very good relationships staff have with their pupils, which ensures that pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are fun and creative, capturing the imagination of pupils. Activities are generally well pitched to meet the needs of all pupils. However, work is sometimes not challenging enough to extend learning, particularly for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1. The work of teaching assistants is of a high quality. They are well trained and are deployed effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Teachers plan lessons so that there is plenty of opportunity for talk and discussion. Pupils work well together, particularly in pairs, as well as independently. Homework is used well to extend learning beyond school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is first class. Recent changes have enabled very good links between subjects that add interest, fun and enjoyment to learning. Literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology skills are consistently planned into the topic cycle and used well in other subjects. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to learn independently and to develop skills and knowledge. An excellent range of additional activities, including a wealth of local visits, enhances the curriculum. The school makes excellent use of the local environment, enabling pupils to use their skills to find out about the rich history of their area. The school makes excellent use of visitors and professional groups to support a rich and broad curriculum in the fields of dance, art and music. Parents have played a key role in developing the curriculum. They support their children when they have project work to carry out at home and enthusiastically took part, for example, in a stargazing evening when everyone learns together.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is excellent. All staff are totally committed to pupils' health and safety, and procedures for safeguarding and maintaining child protection meet requirements. Parents rightly feel that this is a school where their children are cared for and valued as individuals. Staff and pupils value and respect each other. Academic guidance has developed considerably since the last inspection. Marking in literacy and numeracy tells pupils what they have achieved as well as what they have to do to improve. Pupils' targets are challenging and are used to help them know what they have to do to achieve well. This has helped to give pupils greater self-confidence in their learning. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are in place and

used well, but as yet are not meticulous enough to ensure that there is always improved provision for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher inspires the inclusive ethos of the school and provides an excellent lead in promoting the well-being of the pupils. Staff at all levels are involved and a team spirit pervades the school. The headteacher knows the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and this is evident in the school's self-evaluation. The senior leadership team, governors and staff work well together as a team to raise standards and set a good tone and atmosphere for learning. The governing body is led well. It has benefited from wise and experienced governors and is well prepared and well placed to oversee the school's continued improvements. The role of subject leaders is not developed enough so that all are fully involved in monitoring. Staff work well together to track pupils' progress but as yet this is not rigorous enough to be able to ensure that there is improved provision for pupils when needed. The school's involvement in the local community and its success in extending pupils' awareness of other beliefs and ways of life shows good community cohesion. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection.

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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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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**

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tritlington Church of England First School, Northumberland, NE61 3DU

I am writing to thank you for making me feel so welcome when I inspected your school. I know I saw you for only one day, as you all had a trip on my second day with you, but I really enjoyed talking to you and have good memories of how friendly you were, not just towards me but also towards each other and your teachers. The teachers care for you well and I was impressed with the care and friendliness you show towards each other. I judged your school to be good.

I looked at many parts of school life, including how all the adults in school help you to understand about being healthy. When I asked you about this you were so good at telling me how much you knew about the importance of healthy food, regular exercise and how to keep safe that I was amazed. It was good to see that you raise funds for charity and help so much in your community. I thought that the way you all work and play so well together and help each other develop shows your personal development is outstanding.

I enjoyed spending time in each of your classrooms, not just watching you learning inside, although that was good, but outside as well. How lucky you are to have such lovely fields around your school. Talking with you at break time, you obviously enjoy playing on the grass and around the trees as well as on the playground. Teachers work very hard to help you learn. In fact, I was able to say that their teaching is good. I think this is helped because they plan exciting lessons for you. This is called the curriculum and it is excellent. It is really good that you helped to design a new style of curriculum and some of this work is done at home with your parents. I liked the idea of your stargazing evening and gather you also had a camp fire as well!

I have asked your school to challenge you much more, in all areas of the curriculum, so that many of you can achieve higher levels. I have also asked your school to make sure that when termly assessments are checked it looks extra carefully to make sure that everyone is getting as much help as possible.

I was really pleased to tell your headteacher that your school is a good school. I know how proud the school is of all you do. Well done and I hope you all continue to work hard as well as enjoy school.

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector