

Netherthong Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107660
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336929
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Brenda Clarke

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Rushton
Headteacher	Mr R Dodd
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plan, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment over time. The inspectors also analysed 97 questionnaires returned by parents.

- pupils' standards in mathematics and the effectiveness of the school's strategies to addresses weaknesses in this subject
- whether the quality of teaching and accuracy of teachers' assessments ensures sufficient challenge for high attaining pupils at Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils
- how temporary changes in leadership and management are affecting the school
- pupils' understanding and appreciation of communities that are different to their own.

Information about the school

Netherthong Primary School is a medium sized school drawing pupils from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A below average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage in one Reception class. The school has gained Activemark Gold, Healthy Schools Status and Investors in Pupils Award.

There have been significant changes in staffing since July 2009. Currently, a headteacher from another school and a newly appointed deputy headteacher lead the senior management team. A permanent headteacher has been appointed for January 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Netherthong is a satisfactory school which has some good and some outstanding features. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Whilst pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good. This is because a significant minority of pupils do not reach the higher levels in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils' recall of number facts is not quick enough, which impacts on their problem solving skills, and some higher attaining pupils lack the investigative skills required to reach the higher levels in both mathematics and science.

Pupils are proud and committed to their school. 'I love my school.' is a typical comment seen on their completed questionnaires. School council members take their responsibilities very seriously and all pupils are involved in the school's decision making processes. Pupils have great faith in staff and feel very safe. They are polite and friendly and show real care and concern for others. Through involvement in the Activemark and Healthy Schools award pupils have an outstanding understanding about healthy lifestyles and readily discuss the benefits of exercise, a balanced diet and the dangers of drugs. In gaining the Investors in Pupils award and through links with another school, pupils really appreciate cultural diversity and readily challenge racism.

Teaching has many good features. Relationships are excellent, resulting in pupils' outstanding behaviour. When pupils were asked what they liked most about the school, 'the teachers', and 'helpful adults' were among their ready replies. Teachers promote speaking skills very effectively enabling pupils to express themselves clearly and confidently. Teachers have good subject knowledge overall, but in mathematics do not consistently use assessment information to ensure that activities are carefully matched to pupils' differing needs, nor to provide additional challenge for higher attaining pupils.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and some aspects are good. Pupils' high standards in English have been maintained. The school's commitment to community cohesion has developed strongly and now provides pupils with a wider perspective of the local and wider community. Mechanisms for tracking pupils' progress have been sharpened and provide clear and up to date information about the gains pupils are making. The recently introduced Assessment for Learning programme has clarified teachers' perception of the learning that has taken place and is beginning to be used to improve teachers' lesson planning. This initiative has had too little time to embed but there are already encouraging signs that pupils are making better progress.

The school is soundly led and managed and benefits from an experienced and conscientious governing body. The acting headteacher has gained the confidence and

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respect of staff, children and parents and has quickly picked up the reins of guiding the school forward. Senior managers have recently undertaken a rigorous evaluation of English, mathematics and science provision and have developed perceptive plans to address areas of weakness. They have already begun to make good improvements, for example, evaluating science resources and purchasing sufficient apparatus for whole class investigations. This is already leading to a greater emphasis on experimentation in lessons and is adding stimulation and enjoyment to pupils' learning. As a result pupils are becoming more confident, independent learners. These changes provide the clear direction that the school needs at this time of change and puts the school in a strong position to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in mathematics by developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills and problem solving techniques, and by ensuring good challenge for all pupils.
- Use assessments more effectively to:
 - ensure that work meets pupils' differing needs, particularly in mathematics and science
 - set challenging targets for all pupils.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that all lessons run at a rigorous pace and are suitably challenging for all pupils.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness grade is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

From starting points which are above those typically expected of four-year-olds, children make good progress, so that by the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is well above average. Pupils' attainment overall by the end of Year 6 has been above the national average for 11-year-olds over a number of years and their achievement has been satisfactory overall.

In lessons seen during inspection, pupils were enjoying their learning, although a minority worked at a satisfactory rather than a brisk pace and were capable of achieving more in the lesson. This resulted in pupils' progress in lessons being satisfactory rather than good overall. Where learning and progress were good challenging timescales were given, no time was wasted and there was a high focus on working hard. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well due to the carefully planned support they receive.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils have a pronounced sense of right and wrong and take exceptional care of one another. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate high levels of personal safety at work and play. Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities extremely seriously, for example, as school council members,

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play leaders or when acting as befrienders to younger children. They develop mature attitudes to learning and are thoughtful and reflective. Attendance is good. Pupils work extremely well in teams, cooperate, share, collaborate and take turns. This, together with very good opportunities to learn business skills places them in an excellent position to embark on the next stage of learning. The school's outstanding nurture of pupils' personal development has ensured that Netherthong is a place where everyone considers and values the needs of others. As a result the school is a place where everyone feels safe and secure.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has many good features but is satisfactory overall. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave so that lessons run smoothly. All teachers share the purpose of the lesson and give precise explanations so that pupils are clear about their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is strongest in the teaching of English, and is improving significantly in science as teachers develop more opportunities for scientific investigations. The main weakness in teaching is that work planned does not

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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consistently meet the differing needs of all the pupils in the class, particularly in mathematics. This is because teachers' use of assessment of pupils' learning is not used as effectively as it could be to set tasks which closely match the needs of individuals and groups. In most lessons observed during the inspection lack of challenging timescales resulted in pupils working at a satisfactory, rather than a rigorous pace. Teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils of how well they are doing or their next steps in learning.

The good curriculum is well organised, balanced and often stimulating. Pupils particularly appreciate exciting visits, residentials and the good range of clubs. Opportunities to work with visiting artists result in well above average standards in pupils' art work and stimulating displays across the school. There is a strong emphasis on developing a theme based approach that enables pupils to practise, develop and transfer their knowledge and skills across subjects, for example, designing puppets in technology and then using these to understand how shadows are formed in a science lesson. The one weakness in the curriculum is that it does not consistently challenge higher attaining pupils to take their learning further, for example, by independently finding answers to challenging mathematics problems.

The care which adults show for pupils and their excellent relationships with one another mean that adults provide excellent role models for pupils. There are strong and effective partnerships with parents. Transition arrangements are very effective, for example, visiting teachers and taster days prepare pupils well for their next stage of learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the clear guidance of the acting headteacher, the newly formed senior management team is taking the school forward by tackling the most important priorities and providing staff with a determination to succeed. All staff have been involved in monitoring the school's work and have devised appropriate short and long term goals for improvement. However, while these are appropriately focussed on improving teaching and assessment, they are at an early stage of development and have yet to impact on provision. Staff show real enthusiasm for initiating and managing change. All teachers are now involved in the assessment process but are still learning how to plan lessons to improve progress for pupils when evaluating the impact of pupils' learning. The school is effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. For example,

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the management of special educational needs is a particular strength, involving parents fully in developing targets and initiatives to support their children's learning at home. This is a key reason why pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Governors support and challenge the school effectively and use their expertise well in finance, health and safety and education matters. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and are pleased that their views are taken seriously. Good partnerships with other schools and agencies contribute effectively, enriching provision for pupils. For example, through ambitious initiatives such as twinning between schools, community cohesion is promoted very effectively so that pupils develop an excellent understanding of the wider local and international communities. Safeguarding procedures are good and all statutory requirements are met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills above those expected for their age. Their progress is consistently very good, so that, by the end of Reception, the majority are working well beyond the expectations for this age group. Children behave exceptionally well and show high levels of social development as they share, discuss and try out ideas. Teaching is outstanding. There is an excellent balance between activities, both indoors and outside. For example, through well planned activities children discover things for themselves, whilst at other times taking part in highly structured teaching sessions. Children are happily independent and are confident to tackle challenges such as writing

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simple words independently. Provision is firmly based on developing early language and numeracy skills in creative ways and by providing exciting opportunities to practise skills in exciting ways, for example, answering the phone and writing about their designs in the fashion/design shop. A significant contributory factor is the effective intervention of staff who challenge children's thinking through skilled questioning.

Parents say that induction procedures and home/school links are outstanding so that children settle very quickly. Outstanding leadership and excellent team work provide a vibrant and purposeful learning environment in which children thrive. Assessment and tracking systems are comprehensive and used very effectively to promote the learning of each child. The staff take great care of children to ensure their health and safety.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents are extremely happy with the school. Several parents added positive comments to the questionnaires. Most feel that their children enjoy school and that school keeps them safe. A very small minority question whether their children are making sufficient progress; others would like more information about their children's progress and help with supporting learning at home. Inspectors found that the school provides satisfactory opportunities for support with learning at home, for example, using the exciting Digital Brain initiative to develop learning further. However, inspection findings agree that the information parents receive about their children's progress is limited.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Netherthong Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	136	70	50	26	6	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	52	92	47	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	31	112	58	16	8	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	34	110	57	12	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	102	53	80	42	8	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	47	86	45	10	5	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	41	104	54	8	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	90	48	80	43	12	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	38	104	54	12	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	35	116	60	6	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	31	124	65	2	1	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	72	38	114	60	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	90	47	96	50	4	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Thank you very much for making the inspectors so welcome and answering all our questions. You spoke so clearly and enthusiastically in lessons and around the school. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about your work and the ways in which you help around the school.

Yours is a satisfactory school that has some good and also outstanding features. You enjoy school so much because it is a happy and exciting place to be. You tell us that you really like your teachers and that all adults keep you very safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you show real care and concern for others. You make good progress in English and science, but your progress is satisfactory in mathematics. This is because, for some of you, your recall of number facts such as multiplication tables is not always quick enough and this affects the speed at which you solve number problems. Your teachers know you very well and mostly plan work that challenges you. However, the work is sometimes a little too easy, especially for those pupils who are working at the higher levels. Some of you also tell us that you do not know how well you are doing. We have asked your acting headteacher, the staff and governors to do three things to make the school even better for you.

- Make sure that your standards in mathematics reach those of English and science.
- Make sure that teachers always plan work that is not too easy or too hard but gives you good challenge in your learning.
- Improve teachers' marking and the targets they set for you so that you are sure about the progress you are making and what you need to do next to improve.

You can help by keeping up the hard work and continuing to learn those number facts!

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