

Annfield Plain Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114025
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338275
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Jones

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Ullathorne
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Kane
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited four lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, lesson observation records, pupils' work, individual education plans and 20 parental questionnaires.

- the measures taken by the school to improve attendance
- the progress of boys, particularly in literacy
- the quality of marking and feedback to pupils
- the school's plans to develop community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average infant school serving the area to the south west of Stanley in County Durham. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes.

The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school overall and the curriculum and aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. Led by its inspiring headteacher, the whole school community subscribes to a very warm, caring ethos where mutual respect and consideration are very much the order of the day.

From entering Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below average, children get off to a flying start as a result of the good provision. They continue to make good progress in all subjects and leave at the end of Year 2 with average standards.

The outstanding curriculum results in pupils enjoying lessons a great deal. The school has very carefully analysed precisely what the pupils need and how it can make learning relevant, interesting and fun. Teaching is consistently good. While the teaching of literacy has improved since the last inspection, teachers sometimes miss opportunities in other subjects to promote pupils' literacy skills, such as the use of new vocabulary or the opportunities to answer questions more fully.

Pupils demonstrate outstanding awareness of safety related issues and they enthusiastically grasp the plentiful opportunities to make a positive contribution to school life. Similarly, they show outstanding awareness of how to lead fit, healthy lifestyles. The school is aware that it now needs to improve attendance, which has been no better than satisfactory.

The school has addressed all the issues from the last inspection well. Self-evaluation is rigorous, involves all staff and leads to carefully considered actions. This has resulted in rising standards and all groups of pupils making good progress. Since the last inspection, the quality and accuracy of assessment has improved substantially. The school has also overhauled its curriculum extremely successfully to reflect the needs of its pupils, particularly boys, and local circumstances. This illustrates well the school's good capacity to sustain its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure literacy is developed across all subject areas by:
 - - allowing pupils more opportunities to give extended answers to questions
 - - help pupils to use more complex vocabulary
 - - encouraging good writing skills across the curriculum, not only in literacy lessons.
- Improve attendance by:
 - - working with parents and outside agencies to promote the importance of regular attendance

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

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- - linking the rewards system to good attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, pupils behave well and relate positively to each other and to adults. The very rich curriculum and imaginative teaching, ensure that pupils work busily in all lessons and are enthusiastic about their learning.

Pupils begin Year 1 with skills that are below average. They make good progress in all subjects to leave at the end of Year 2 with average standards. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are continuing to rise in Key Stage 1. In the 2007 and 2008 teacher assessments in Year 2, girls outperformed boys by a significant margin. The tireless efforts by all staff to boost boys' achievement have now borne fruit, which resulted in boys reaching similar standards to girls in 2009. Boys' reading and writing skills have improved significantly over the past year. This has been due to the innovative approaches used by the school, including the use of visiting authors and the engagement of pupils' male relatives in promoting reading. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to carefully tailored courses which address their needs well.

There are abundant opportunities for pupils to make valuable positive contributions, and many grasp these willingly. 'Electricity monitors' very enthusiastically tour the school switching off lights. The very active school council discusses diets with catering staff and organises coffee mornings for the community. Pupils' awareness of safety is outstanding. Even very young pupils talk in detail about 'stranger danger' and risks associated with bonfire night. They have an outstanding awareness of health related issues. Nearly all pupils make healthy choices at lunchtime. They take part in vigorous physical exercise in the 'sticky kids' exercises in the morning and fully use play equipment during playtimes.

Pupils across the school demonstrate impressive skills in using information and communication technology for their age. This is because the outstanding curriculum ensures computers are used as a normal part of the school routine. This, combined with good opportunities for pupils to handle money and take part in enterprise activities, means that their economic well-being is good. Pupils display good awareness of moral and spiritual issues. For example, aided by a recent trip to a war museum, they talked about the significance of the poppy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Central to the school's success is the very vibrant, rich curriculum. This makes learning interesting and relevant. Pupils buzz with excitement as they learn about local history aided by frequent visits to the nearby Beamish museum. The many extra-curricular activities such as drama, many sports clubs and dance enhance the experiences of pupils significantly.

The consistently effective teaching is securing good outcomes for pupils. Significant strengths include the very good use of information and communication technology to enhance and extend learning. In lessons other than literacy, however, there are sometimes missed opportunities for pupils to use new vocabulary, to develop their speaking and listening skills further and to develop writing skills. The quality of marking and assessment to support learning is good. Teachers mark pupils' work accurately and give them good quality feedback on their learning which leaves them in no doubt what they need to do to improve.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for. Dedicated teaching assistants know just how much support to give to pupils while also encouraging them to become independent learners. Vulnerable pupils are well looked after and very good records are kept to ensure they are safe and secure. A close relationship with the feeder junior school means that pupils settle well into their new surroundings in Year 3. The school has sound plans in place to work closely with parents and outside agencies to improve attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	
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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads with vision and energy. She trusts staff implicitly. As a result, there is a palpable sense of shared responsibility and high morale. All staff have good knowledge of how to use data effectively in order to help to raise standards and to identify any underachievement quickly. Subject leaders closely monitor their areas of responsibility and appropriately train staff in the implementation of new techniques and initiatives. Any problems are identified quickly and measures are swiftly put into place to remedy them.

Equal opportunities are promoted well. No groups of pupils underachieve. Any discrimination is tackled decisively by the school. Equality plans reflect the nature of the school well and there are plans in place to further promote awareness of disabilities and different cultures. Safeguarding arrangements are good and fully meet requirements. Policies are reviewed regularly and at the time of the inspection the site was safe and secure. Governors are a frequent presence in the school, as are the HAPIs, a group of parent volunteers who help around the school. Governors provide a wide range of skills and have undertaken particularly good training in safeguarding. However, they are less well informed through the development plans about the way in which key issues will be addressed.

Plans are in place to further develop the school's good promotion of community cohesion. The school has very good links with the local community and with local businesses, which have been well used to enhance the curriculum. The school has effective plans to develop global links further and to increase pupils' understanding of different religions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
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

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	
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those expected, particularly in communication and language. They make good progress overall and leave with below average skills. However, the progress children make is uneven across all the areas of learning. For example, children make better progress in writing and personal, social and emotional development, than they do in reading. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are used well to promote learning, with staff skilfully supporting children as they learn through playing together. Structured activities are in place for children, although a strong feature of the setting is the extent to which children are encouraged to very quickly become independent. Children choose their own activities, always clear up after themselves, remind each other to wash their hands and choose healthy snacks throughout the day.

The setting is well led and managed. All staff make frequent assessments of children's development which are clearly documented and inform future planning well. The environment is very welcoming, safe and secure. Risk assessments and statutory policies are well maintained. Very good links exist with feeder nurseries, and with parents who are wholly supportive of the school's work.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school. No parents expressed concerns when they completed the questionnaire. Parents are particularly positive about how well their children settle into the school and how visits and trips make learning interesting and fun.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Annfield Plain Infant 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 inspection team received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 83 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	70	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	50	10	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	70	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	50	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	85	3	15	0	0	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)	7	35	12	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	75	5	25	0	0	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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Annfield Plain Infant School, Stanley, DH9 7UY

Thank you very much for the warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out on our visit.

You go to a good school, but some things about it are outstanding (this is another of those 'wow' words which means really, really good). You all behave very well in lessons and in the playground. I enjoyed talking to you about bonfire night and healthy food. You certainly know a lot about how to keep safe and how fruit, vegetables and daily exercise keep you fit. I was also very impressed by the ways you help and support each other with the mini buds and the bus stops in the playground. The school makes learning really interesting and fun for you. Teachers make sure that you never get bored by taking you on lots of trips and there are plenty of sports activities to get involved in. Children in Reception also are very well looked after by caring adults and they make good progress.

I have asked your headteacher and the staff to do the following things to make your school even better:

- to help you to learn and use new, interesting words, to improve your writing and to give you more time to answer questions in all your lessons
- work with your parents and carers to improve your attendance.

You can help by carrying on being the delightful children you are and by making sure you attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Jones

Lead inspector

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