

Frosterley Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114062
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338290
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pamela Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs A Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited eight lessons, observing four members of the teaching staff. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, the school improvement partner and groups of pupils, including some of the school council. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's plans for improvement; safeguarding documentation; data relating to pupils' attainment and progress; 46 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 31 questionnaires received from pupils and 11 received from staff.

- whether current pupils are making good progress and reaching higher standards
- the effectiveness of the use of assessment to support learning particularly in mixed age classes
- whether the move towards distributed leadership and management is having a positive impact on school self-evaluation, priorities for improvement and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This small primary school caters for pupils from predominantly White British backgrounds. A much greater proportion of pupils than in other schools nationally have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Numbers in the school have fallen since the last inspection and the school has undergone significant staff restructuring. A new headteacher took up post in September 2008 and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed to commence in September 2010. In the interim a seconded deputy headteacher joined the school during the week of inspection. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy School award 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It is a caring school where the safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority and equal opportunities are promoted appropriately. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school where they feel safe and secure. Their attendance levels are good. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of a balanced diet and regular exercise. Good partnerships with outside agencies and other local schools have had a positive influence on the pastoral care given to pupils and on the enjoyment of activities which the school would not otherwise be able to provide.

Children get off to a satisfactory start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is broadly average overall.

The headteacher has introduced satisfactory systems of self-evaluation which have led to the introduction of a range of strategies to raise standards. These are beginning to be effective but there is still some way to go, particularly in mathematics. Staff are fully supportive of the actions which have been taken, however, a system of distributed leadership, where staff take on responsibility for leadership and management of specific areas of the school's work, is at an early stage of development. Nevertheless, the success of the actions taken demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Although a structured programme for the teaching of phonics is having a good impact on the standards of reading and writing for younger pupils, planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is too heavily weighted towards the development of children's skills in literacy and numeracy. This has led to slower progress in children's personal, social, emotional and physical development. Opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to develop their writing skills in other subjects and the use of visits to places of interest to provide pupils with a real purpose for their work is having a positive impact. Although positive changes have been made to the organisation for teaching mathematics, weaknesses in curriculum provision remain. While pupils' mathematical knowledge is developed systematically, pupils are provided with too few practical opportunities to put this knowledge into practice or to solve problems. Gaps in pupils' understanding of how to apply their mathematical knowledge are therefore not adequately identified or quickly addressed. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are therefore below average.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and behaviour in lessons observed during the inspection was in the main good. Pupils, however, confirm parental views, that at times of staff change during the school

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week, the behaviour of a small number of pupils is not always managed effectively. As a result learning is at times disrupted. Professional development has enabled teachers to improve their skills; however, staff are at an early stage of improving their skill in assessing pupils' work and in using this information to support pupils' learning. Consequently, the rate of pupils' progress is at times variable. This is a key reason why pupils' progress remains satisfactory overall and why standards are not rising at a faster rate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise standards, increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - improving teachers' skills in assessing pupils' work to ensure that assessment information is consistently used to support learning
 - involving pupils more actively in assessing how well they are learning
 - giving pupils who pick up new skills quickly the opportunity to show initiative when working independently or collaboratively
 - ensuring that pupils' behaviour is managed effectively
- Improve curriculum provision particularly in mathematics by:
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to investigate and solve problems through practical activities
 - closely monitoring pupils' work to identify and address any gaps in their understanding
 - providing pupils with activities which capture their imagination and inspire learning
- Improve outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - planning a curriculum which clearly identifies how each area of learning will be taught and how the needs of each child will be met.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their average attainment at the end of Year 6 represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. In lessons and through intervention programmes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support to ensure that they achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils generally listen attentively and work hard, taking a pride in their achievements. When activities are of a practical nature or linked to visits outside of school, pupils are enthusiastic, very keen to demonstrate their knowledge and say they cannot wait to learn more. This type of activity is not however a regular feature of mathematics lessons and as a result standards in mathematics are below average.

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Whilst the vast majority of pupils behave well, inspection evidence gathered from parents and pupils indicates that a small number of pupils do at times display challenging behaviour. Behaviour is therefore satisfactory overall. Younger pupils confirm that older pupils do a good job as buddies and that this contributes to their feelings of safety and enjoyment of school. Pupils carry out their duties such as school council members conscientiously. They contribute to a range of charities and are proud of their contribution to the development of the school ground. Limited opportunities are available however for pupils to influence their own learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is enhanced by a range of opportunities for art and music. Visits and visitors including those which provide opportunities for pupils to explore their own culture and experience that of others is a strength of pupils cultural development and contributes well to a cohesive school community.

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	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their pupils well and in the main they succeed in establishing orderly classroom routines so pupils settle to work quickly. Pupils are confident that their

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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teachers will provide them with help if they find work difficult. Marking of pupils' work generally provides clear guidance for further improvement although this is currently weaker in mathematics. Teachers are at an early stage of developing new skills in respect of the assessment of pupils' work. Although their knowledge of how well pupils are doing is generally accurate and used well to provide those in particular need with targeted support, less effective use is made of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning for each pupil. Teachers question pupils well to extend learning and check understanding; however, they do not regularly adapt their lessons as a result of the responses received. Subjects are in the main soundly covered but there has been limited opportunity for staff to develop a more creative curriculum. Although the curriculum is securely adapted to meet the needs of those who have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities opportunities are missed to follow the interests of pupils to further raise their aspirations and interests.

Good arrangements for the care of pupils ensure that they feel happy and secure at school. Carefully tailored support for those with additional learning needs, including those who join the school midway through the year, help them to settle quickly into the school's orderly routines. Support and guidance for pupils' achievement and personal development is satisfactory. Although guidance for pupils' personal development is often of a good quality, staff are not always consistent in their expectation of how this will be put into practice.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses in provision and recognises that the school improvement plan is not yet a sufficiently sharply focused tool for driving up attainment. Systems to track pupil progress are now fully in place. Every term, assessments in reading, writing and mathematics identify how successfully pupils are working towards their targets. Teachers meet with the headteacher to reflect on the assessments and identify barriers to learning. Good partnerships with other agencies are established to help pupils overcome specific barriers and this generally results in improved progress. However, the full potential of this strategy has not yet been realised due to the inconsistency with which the information is used within teachers' planning. Similarly although the policies and procedures relating to equal opportunity are in place the analysis of data in order to compare the progress of different groups of pupils is at

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an early stage of development.

Governors are supportive of the school and are particularly robust in discharging their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding pupils. This is given a high priority and all requirements are fully met. Governors have a clear determination to maintain four classes in school despite falling numbers. This is putting a strain on resources and governors have not yet monitored the impact this has on the quality of provision in all areas of the school's work. The school promotes community cohesion well and as a result, pupils have a good understanding of the different cultures and faiths within the United Kingdom and the wider world. However, the response of parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire indicates that there is still work to do in order to re-establish the school's place at the centre of the local community.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they enter the Reception class the level of children's skills and knowledge varies but overall is broadly average. As a result of satisfactory teaching, children make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Observation and assessment of children's learning are satisfactory. Information is used to plan a satisfactory range of activities both in the classroom and outside that help children to consolidate their skills. However, although the curriculum meets requirements, planning does not always identify themes to include all areas of learning or how the needs of each child will be met. Good welfare procedures are in place, children settle happily into school routines and feel secure because they are well cared

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for by staff. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The benefits derived from involving parents and carers in their children's learning have been fully recognised and actions taken to involve 'Parents as Partners' have been successful in improving the standards children attain in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Approximately three quarters of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Although the majority of those who did so are positive in their views, a significant proportion of parents and carers expressed some concerns. In the main these centred on pupils' standards in mathematics and concern that the school does not always deal with poor behaviour effectively. Inspectors found that in the main behaviour is satisfactory and generally managed appropriately. However, the school is aware that during changes in staffing the behaviour of a few pupils falls below the standard expected. Inspection evidence indicates that parents are right to have some concern regarding standards in mathematics which are below average.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Frosterley Community 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	50	17	37	3	7	2	4
The school keeps my child safe	18	39	23	50	5	11	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	30	26	57	6	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	35	15	33	13	28	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	19	41	16	35	9	20	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	28	25	54	8	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	33	26	57	5	11	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)	14	30	24	52	5	11	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	33	19	41	8	17	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	26	10	22	18	39	5	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	28	20	43	8	17	5	11
The school is led and managed effectively	15	33	15	33	8	17	5	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	37	21	46	5	11	2	4

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for your welcome during our recent visit to your school. The group of school council members and other pupils who spoke to us were very helpful and we appreciated you giving up your time to talk to us. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe and happy. That can be seen clearly in how well you attend. Your knowledge of which foods are best for you to eat to help you to learn was impressive. The school does a good job in building partnerships with local experts and other schools so that you can meet a wider range of people and learn about faiths and cultures different from your own.

Most of you make satisfactory progress so that by the end of Year 6 the standards you reach are broadly similar to those of other pupils of your age. However, this is not the case in mathematics. So that you can reach higher standards we want all teachers to be aware of your needs and if necessary, change their plans to help you understand or to move on to new things. It was good to see how much the pupils in Class 4 enjoyed their mathematics lesson when they were given the opportunity to be involved in practical activities. We have asked that this is a much more regular feature of your mathematics lessons. The children in the Reception class do well when they are learning how to read, write and count and we have asked that teachers make sure that the activities they do also help them to developed good skills in the other areas of their learning.

Although most of you behave well in lessons, your parents and carers told us, and you agreed, that occasionally the behaviour of a few pupils is not as good as it should be. We have asked the school to look carefully at how behaviour is managed in lessons so the learning is not disrupted. You can play your part by always respecting your teachers and behaving as well as you should.

Best wishes for your future learning.

Yours sincerely,

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