

Otterburn First School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 122215 |
| Local Authority | Northumberland |
| Inspection number | 340107 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 December 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Margaret Armstrong |

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 | 5–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 51 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Andrew Shone |
| Headteacher | Mr Geoff Raffle |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Otterburn Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE19 1JF |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited four lessons, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and the chair and vice-chair of governors. They observed the school's work including the safeguarding procedures. The inspection team scrutinised the 41 questionnaires that were returned by parents. Questionnaires completed by staff and pupils were also analysed during the inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- pupils' progress, particularly in writing
- the rigour of the systems aimed at improving teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a small school situated in an isolated, rural location near Otterburn. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased in recent years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average as is the percentage who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a single Reception class. In the afternoons, Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils for some lessons. The school hosts a pre-school group which is managed independently of the school and did not form part of this inspection. A separate report for this provision can be found on the Ofsted website. The school holds the Healthy School Award.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the management of the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils.

The headteacher and his staff have established a happy, friendly and welcoming school. Positive relationships and good pastoral care result in pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Arrangements to safeguard pupils do not meet statutory requirements, which is why the school's overall effectiveness has been judged to be inadequate. The school plans to improve this aspect of its work immediately. Pupils enjoy school. Their good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe and their good social skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils spoke confidently about the contribution they have made to the school. For example, they take their responsibilities as fund-raisers and school councillors very seriously. The overwhelming majority of parents are very appreciative of the work of the school and speak highly of the 'homely' atmosphere in 'a school which is a huge asset to the local community'.

When children start school in Reception their skills and levels of development are below those typical for their age. They rapidly become active, independent learners and achieve well. Although many aspects of the provision in the Reception class are good, the school does not fully meet the statutory welfare requirements. All pupils make good progress throughout the school so that when they leave in Year 4 they attain above average standards. This is a result of consistently good teaching which challenges and motivates pupils. Subjects are blended into themes which maximise pupils' experiences and which give real meaning to learning. Teachers make effective use of assessment data to tailor learning and ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

Generally, self-evaluation is accurate and this has meant the school has successfully addressed areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. For example, the introduction of effective monitoring procedures has improved the quality of teaching across the school. Governors are well informed and make a strong contribution to school life but they have not provided enough challenge to senior leaders. They have not ensured that statutory requirements are fully met. Policies and procedures on key aspects of the school's work, such as the procedures for safeguarding are not reviewed frequently enough or in sufficient depth. The school's track record of improvements in pupils' academic performance confirms there is satisfactory capacity for sustained

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improvement. Resources are managed well to secure good outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures, including those for the Early Years Foundation Stage, meet statutory requirements.
- Increase the skills of the governing body so they can challenge and support the school and carry out their statutory duties effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes to learning and this contributes to their good achievement and the good progress they make in lessons. They arrive punctually, respond well in lessons and take a pride in their work. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make consistently good progress and attain above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4. The school is successful in ensuring that different groups of pupils all achieve well. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are carefully identified and provided for effectively.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They say they feel safe and are confident that bullying is not tolerated. Visits to places of worship, links with children in other countries and opportunities to contribute to the local community promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are proud of the contributions they make to their school. They act responsibly as 'Buddies' to other pupils and serve on the school council. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning. Attendance is average and improving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|--|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |

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

How effective is the provision?

Senior leaders have worked hard to improve teaching and learning and this has been successful. Teachers are skilled in managing and motivating all groups of pupils. As a result, lessons have good pace and pupils engage well. Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They explain to pupils how they will know when objectives have been achieved. Consequently, pupils know what they have to do to be successful and improve their work. Pupils are eager to learn because teachers use a range of exciting activities and resources. For example, in a well planned writing lesson, pupils wrote inspiring 'Winter Poems' following exploration of the extensive school grounds. Teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to ensure tasks are smartly tailored to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are well trained and confident in their skills; they provide good support for individuals and small groups.

The curriculum has been developed well to enhance pupils' motivation to learn. There is a consistent approach to teaching and applying literacy, mathematics and other key skills through a thematic approach. Teachers bring learning alive and put it in an everyday context. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 tasted family meals from the 1930s while younger pupils worked with a local archaeologist to research the Battle of Otterburn. A wide range of activities are available to pupils during the school day. These include opportunities to participate in exciting projects for music, dance and sport. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences outside school. They talked excitedly about the contribution they have made to the maintenance of the 'Wildflower Meadow' in the Northumberland National Park. The partnership between other schools in the area is supporting the school well in developing its curriculum. As a result, pupils benefit from specialist support in areas such as yoga, drumming, singing and dance.

The good pastoral support pupils receive from the staff and headteacher result in good behaviour and a caring atmosphere around school. All adults share a good understanding of the needs of individuals and provide an inclusive environment where all pupils confidently learn. This supportive approach is most valued by parents and pupils. Parents are kept informed of their children's well-being and they receive good quality information about academic progress and their child's current targets for improvement. However, although many aspects of care, guidance and support are effective, the overall judgement for this area of work is affected by the weaknesses in the school's safeguarding procedures which are inadequate.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 4 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's success in sharing his ambition for the school is demonstrated by the unity of purpose shown at all levels. The headteacher, for example, is increasing the rigour in monitoring by sharing this responsibility more widely through the school. Staff appreciate the support they receive and act readily on advice which is given. As a result, teaching is consistently good across the school. All members of the school community share the same values and this ensures the school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Leaders succeed well in ensuring pupils flourish in a cohesive school community. Partnerships with the local community and other specialist agencies are used effectively to ensure pupils are well supported. Consequently, the school promotes community cohesion well. The governing body has undergone some change in recent years and several new governors have been appointed. Governors support the school well but they have not challenged senior leaders sufficiently to explain the quality of all aspects of its work. School policies are not monitored regularly enough to ensure they are kept fully up to date. Consequently, the governing body has failed to ensure the school's safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements and its effectiveness is, therefore, inadequate.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 4 |
| 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 | 4 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| 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 community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start and achieve well. From below average starting points children make good progress. By the end of Reception, most are working within the expected levels. Parents are pleased with the start their children make. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good quality support. Children are confident, independent and work together happily on joint tasks. They are willing to make choices and decisions and talk about how much they enjoy school. Good teaching generates a love of learning and makes school an exciting place to be. Classrooms and outdoor learning areas provide a good range of interesting activities which capture children's imagination. Staff plan activities bearing in mind the individual needs of children and generally assessment is used well to monitor progress. Occasionally, opportunities to extend learning through activities children choose for themselves are missed. There are some good aspects including the work done to extend links with the pre-school provider. This supports the school's induction programme well. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate because policies for safeguarding and the training for those working in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not up to date. Leaders have not been rigorous enough in ensuring all welfare requirements are fully met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 4 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 4 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 4 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views of the school. This was matched by the responses of staff and pupils to their questionnaires. Parents said the staff are very approachable and respond quickly to queries and concerns. They feel their children are safe and well cared for. They comment that their children enjoy school, are well prepared to lead a healthy lifestyle and that staff work hard to help all children achieve as well as they should. A few parents raised individual issues. These concerns were investigated, but no evidence was found to substantiate them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Otterburn First 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 51 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 28 | 68 | 13 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 27 | 66 | 14 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 27 | 66 | 14 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 27 | 66 | 13 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 24 | 59 | 15 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 26 | 63 | 14 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 30 | 73 | 10 | 24 | 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) | 21 | 51 | 11 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 27 | 66 | 13 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 26 | 63 | 13 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 26 | 63 | 13 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 29 | 71 | 11 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 30 | 73 | 10 | 24 | 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.



5 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Otterburn First School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE19 1JF

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school recently with my colleague. I enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. I was pleased to see how well you help and support each other. I was impressed with your behaviour and the thoughtful way in which you look after each other. You make a valuable contribution to the school and local community. The displays of your work make the school an attractive place to learn. Your teachers know you well and find lots of interesting ways to help you learn and develop. I saw this in your lessons and in some of the exciting activities the school organises for you. As a result, you attain above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time you leave. You clearly enjoy your learning and your attendance is improving. Well done!

I could see that you are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles and that you enjoy the delicious school lunches. You understand how to stay safe and the school helps you become mature and sensible individuals. The staff are working hard and are keen that you do well. Your parents and carers told us they are very happy with the work of the school. The governors and headteacher have your best interests at heart and are very dedicated to making sure you all do well.

However, there are some very important things the school should improve and because of that it has been given a 'notice to improve'. Inspectors will come back in a few months to see how well the school is doing. I have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- make sure that all of the things they write down about how they keep you safe are up to date, meet all regulations, and that all staff are trained in how to keep you safe.
- make sure governors are able to ask the right questions so they can help the school improve quickly.

You can help by continuing to come to school as regularly as you do, by working as hard as you can and by helping each other in and around the school.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Armstrong

Lead Inspector

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