

Norham St Ceolwulfs CofE Controlled First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135064
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	341607
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Johnson
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Grainger
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed two teachers and seven lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and analysed 14 questionnaires from parents and carers, three from pupils and eight from staff. The inspector also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, at the data the school had collected about the pupils' progress and at the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- current attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how effectively teachers use assessment to help pupils to improve their work and involve them in assessing their own learning
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation to identify and address any underachievement.

Information about the school

Norham St Ceolwulf's CofE Controlled First school is much smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. Almost all pupils are White British and all have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, much lower than average. The school has many awards, including the Healthy Schools award for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The school is part of a federation with another local school, with the headteacher spending half of her time in each school. None of the current teachers was in post at the previous inspection.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Norham St Ceolwulf's is an outstanding school of which pupils, parents and staff are exceedingly proud. Typical of parents' comments are, 'I have been hugely impressed by my son's development', and, 'My child is happy, settled and loves school'.

Since the previous inspection, many aspects of the school have improved, resulting in some significant gains in pupils' achievement and in many areas of personal development, such as behaviour, attendance and contribution to the community. Areas of relative underperformance over the past two years, such as in mathematics and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have been addressed, so that achievement there is now good. The school has been successful in managing significant changes in staffing and a falling school role. This has been done largely through careful planning and flexible teaching arrangements. Pupils are extremely well known and the excellent curriculum is tailor made to each of them. Any underachievement is picked up quickly and strategies put in place to address this. Although assessment is used well to support lesson planning, systems to record and access information about pupils' progress by different teachers are not refined enough at present meaning that progress sometimes does not always rise as fast as it might do. In addition, pupils' independence and enthusiasm are not always capitalised upon well enough to involve them in assessing how well they are learning.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding in this family-like environment. This ensures that pupils feel very safe and well looked after. Pupils are very polite and look after each other very well. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning, as they cooperate with each other extremely well and have very well-honed information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They are particularly excited about their latest enterprise company, 'Herb Heaven', formed to grow and sell herbs. The school has an excellent reputation in the community and the local Member of Parliament recently wrote a letter of thanks to the children for their help in campaigning to keep the village post office open.

All members of staff are extremely positive about all aspects of the school. They work seamlessly as a team, under the highly effective leadership of the headteacher.

Self-evaluation is very accurate and is helping drive the school forward. The fact that so much has improved recently means that the school's capacity to improve even further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Further raise attainment and accelerate progress by:
- – refining systems for recording and monitoring individual pupils' learning and progress to enable all teachers to feed into and access this
- capitalising on the independence of pupils to involve them as much as possible in assessing how well that are learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The quality of learning and progress seen in lessons during the inspection was good. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and achieve well. Their exemplary behaviour makes a significant contribution to their learning, as does their excellent attendance. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on personal and social education, pupils were seen sensitively discussing ways of helping others who were unhappy. In a Key Stage 1 science lesson pupils were most proud of their 'scientific' drawings of plants and they took great care in labelling them accurately. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the close one-to-one support they receive. All groups of pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 to 4, because they receive good quality teaching delivered through a range of interesting learning opportunities, tailored well to their individual needs. By the time pupils leave in Year 4, attainment is above average and they are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning. The rate of progress that pupils make in mathematics has accelerated greatly recently so that their performance there more closely matches that in reading and writing.

Pupils understand very well what it means to have a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of taking on responsibilities. For example, they take very seriously their duties of acting as 'monitors' organising giving out books or ringing the bell at playtimes. They excitedly showed the inspector a video of them wearing kilts at a ceildh they performed for older residents in a local residential home. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their moral and social development is excellent and they are developing a good understanding of other cultures, including those minority ethnic cultures that reflect those seen in the United Kingdom today. They accurately report that behaviour of the vast majority is excellent. They interact very well with each other, because of the school's strong focus on respect and caring for others. When asked to describe what his school was like, one pupil said, 'It's nice because you learn something new every day.'

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.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons move forward at a good pace, with a wide range of interesting activities and the effective use of interactive whiteboards. Teachers use good questioning techniques to challenge pupils and usually there are high expectations of pupils in lessons. Teaching assistants work very well with teachers and provide good proactive support so that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. In most lessons, teachers share clearly with the pupils what it is they should be learning, but they do not involve them enough in assessing for themselves how well they are learning. Teachers' marking is thorough and helpful in making it clear the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. This was particularly evident in writing where a sharp rise in progress has been apparent.

The curriculum is extremely well matched to each pupil. Staff are extremely skilful at delivering lessons to pupils of different ages and different abilities. Key Stage 2 pupils were seen thoroughly enjoying a French lesson, where they acted out scenarios of different sports. Improvements in writing have been influenced by the pupils' first-hand experience of meeting an author and improvements in mathematics have arisen through a problem-solving approach. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of enrichment activities. For example, a memorable experience was a trip on the train to York where a visit to the Jorvik Museum enhanced their learning about the Vikings. The school ensures that there are opportunities for the children to widen their understanding of different cultures, not apparent in the school. For example, they have regular contact with the other school in the federation, where the ethnic mix of children is higher.

Transition arrangements to the local middle school are excellent. Staff are rigorous and thorough in ensuring the highest levels of welfare and care for all pupils, especially the

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most vulnerable. Pupils indicated that they felt that adults cared about them a lot and were most interested in their views.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has managed changes in staffing and a falling roll very well. The senior teacher takes over well the responsibility of running the school on the days when the headteacher is not there. There is a real sense of all members of staff working cohesively and all staff and governors are dedicated to enabling pupils to achieve their best both academically and personally. As a consequence, many aspects of the pupils' personal development are outstanding. There are effective systems for school self-evaluation. These form the basis for identifying weaknesses and setting increasingly challenging targets to drive improvement. Quick action leads to strategies to address underachievement. For example, the focus on problem solving in mathematics over the past year has had a marked effect across the school in raising standards. Currently, all groups of pupils make good progress, reflecting good equality of opportunity.

Governors know the school well and what it needs to do to improve. They act as critical friends effectively, but they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own performance. Safeguarding procedures are good, with clear policies and secure risk-assessment systems. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and value greatly the 'extra mile' that the school goes. The school has carried out a good evaluation of the socio-economic, religious and cultural aspects of community cohesion. While the promotion of community cohesion within school, locally and internationally, is particularly good, links with other schools nationally have not yet been fully established. There is a wide range of effective partnership involvement, including close links with the local authority and the local parish. The federation impacts particularly well, allowing pupils a wider interaction with other children, for example in sport. The school achieves excellent value for money.

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

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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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are variable, mainly due to the small numbers of children entering each year. However, the skills displayed are generally around those expected for their age, although lower in writing and problem solving. Excellent induction procedures with parents help the children to settle quickly and get a confident start to their school life. Most children play together well and are well behaved. They make good progress and, at the end of the Reception Year, reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. A strong focus on literacy ensures that progress there is particularly good.

Adults provide very well for children's welfare. Activities are interesting and children enjoy their learning and are engaged well. There are opportunities to make choices and show independence. Children were seen in a range of activities, including ICT, that contributed well to their learning and personal development. The school makes the best use of the constraints of the building not having a free flow between inside and outside. The large, covered outdoor 'classroom' means that children spend an appropriate time outside, despite the weather. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. All adults work successfully together to give the children a happy and productive time and this is driving up improvement. Systems are now more robust for checking what the children know, understand and can do, although these are not sophisticated enough at present to allow easy input and access of information by different teachers. Despite this, teachers use data increasingly effectively to plan activities to address underachievement. This has been instrumental in bringing about improvements in the progress that the children make.

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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

Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. All felt that the school keeps their children safe and that the children enjoy school. This was very evident during the inspection. One parent disagreed that the school dealt well with unacceptable behaviour and another disagreed that the school took account of their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norham St Ceolwulfs CofE Controlled 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 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 19 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	57	5	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	57	5	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	57	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	57	5	36	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)	2	14	9	64	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	29	7	50	2	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	50	5	36	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	57	6	43	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

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.



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norham St Ceolwulfs CofE Controlled First School, Berwick-on-Tweed, TD15 2JZ

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and I am very grateful for the excellent contribution you made to the inspection. You believe that your school is an outstanding one that really looks after you and helps you to learn well, and I agree with you.

Here are some of the things that I particularly liked.

- You behave exceptionally well and you are most polite.
- You love coming to school and you are very keen to learn.
- You look after each other very well.
- Your teachers make your lessons interesting and they listen carefully to your ideas.
- The adults in school make sure that you are very safe and well cared for.

I also liked the mature way in which you get on with your work in lessons. I have asked the school to make sure that it is easier for the different adults who teach you to share information about how well you are doing. I have also asked your teachers to involve you more in saying how well you are learning in each of your activities. You can help by asking your teachers to make it clear to you how you can tell if you are doing a good job.

It was a delight to hear your singing in assembly and also to have lunch with you. I was very impressed with your plans to grow and sell seeds through your company, 'Herb Heaven'. I wish you every success in that venture and also in your future as a whole.

Yours sincerely

Dr Alison Thomson

Lead inspector

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