

# Grange View Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135634
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	341677
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Bewick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss M Rothwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Grange Road Widdrington Morpeth NE61 5LZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 790686
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 791442
<b>Email address</b>	admin@grangeview.northumberland.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed seven lessons, taught by four teachers, and other activities, including play times and assemblies; they held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They analysed the school's documentation, data on pupils' progress, welfare arrangements and the 30 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers, as well as those from Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- children's progress and personal development through the Early Years Foundation Stage
- teachers' expectations of pupils' learning in lessons
- the quality of pupils' spiritual and cultural development
- the extent to which the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of self-evaluation at all levels of management in developing the school.

## Information about the school

This is a small village school which was re-designated in 2008 as a church school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are from White British families. There is a higher than average mobility among the population of pupils. The school holds the International School, Eco-Schools and Healthy Schools Awards, among others.

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

## 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. It has made good progress in the past two years since its change of status in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The clear-sighted and dedicated leadership of the headteacher has ensured that there is a cohesive and positive approach to the school's development and that a caring, supportive atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils are happy, feel secure and respond well to the work they are given. Their behaviour is good, they are sensitive to others and their sense of community is bolstered by their involvement within the school and the locality.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 4; this represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Standards have improved in all subjects, including writing, because of good teaching, but the quality of writing is not yet on a par with reading and mathematics. Pupils benefit from an increasingly varied curriculum but teachers do not use opportunities in all lessons to develop writing skills. Although marking is helpful and constructive, teachers are not rigorous enough in their expectations. As a result, spelling, handwriting and presentation lack precision. Progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is better in the Reception class where teaching often has good expectations of pupils. Overall, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy work and concentrate well but the staff do not routinely provide activities that are challenging and progressive enough for their abilities.

The school makes good use of a range of influences to improve pupils' personal and academic development. Links with schools in Africa generate a good awareness of other cultures. Public performances in dance and sports fixtures strengthen pupils' teamwork skills and their self-confidence. The Forest School activity is instilling in pupils a healthy respect for the environment. Better links with parents and carers are helping them to support their children's learning more skilfully.

The school is well aware of its strengths and how it can improve. Its action plans are pertinent and effective. Previous weaknesses in, for example, behaviour and writing have been tackled successfully and subject leaders have been empowered to lead their subjects with greater conviction. Governors are supportive and monitor the school regularly. However, they do not evaluate their observations enough nor act sufficiently as a critical friend to the school. Nevertheless, in view of its higher standards, better teaching, a more diverse curriculum and a greater commitment from staff, which has led to improved morale, the school has good capacity to sustain its recent improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - encouraging staff to be more creative in their planning so that all learning activities are stimulating and sufficiently challenging for children
  - ensuring a greater consistency of approach across the two classes.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by ensuring that teachers:
  - maximise opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects
  - insist on a consistently high quality of presentation, spelling and handwriting in pupils' work.
- Develop the effectiveness of governance by ensuring that governors:
  - are more proactive in evaluating the school's provision and outcomes
  - hold the school to account for its actions with greater rigour.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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Pupils enjoy learning and are generally attentive in lessons. Their respect for their teachers ensures that they listen well and respond readily to questions. They are able to sustain concentration even when the subject matter is not entirely gripping, although younger pupils find this harder. Pupils' positive attitudes help them to make good progress through the school. Standards have improved in the past two years and are at least in line with expectations for pupils' age by the end of Year 4, and sometimes higher, notably in reading. This represents good achievement from pupils' starting points. The school has worked successfully to improve pupils' writing but recognises that there is still more work to be done. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve equally well.

Pupils appreciate being at the heart of the school community. They are involved in planning improvements to the school and even beyond; they were, for example, part of the consultation process for the new parish plan. Overseas links enable pupils to understand foreign cultures but there are fewer opportunities to appreciate the different cultures of modern Britain. Pupils look after one another well and are adamant that they are safe in school, citing the approachability of staff. They lead active and healthy lifestyles, although only the older pupils are fully aware of how a diet should be balanced. Behaviour is good. There are occasional incidents of challenging behaviour but pupils say that staff deal with these promptly and efficiently; exclusions are no longer necessary. Good curricular experiences and the pervasive Christian ethos give pupils a sense of belonging and raise their self-esteem, thus benefiting their spiritual development. Overall, they are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

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

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is very focused on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In classrooms the positive rapport between staff and pupils produces a willingness to work and good concentration. Teachers usually have good expectations of pupils and vary these to suit the different abilities of pupils in the mixed-year classes. The brisk pace of learning is helped by good use of interactive whiteboards, skilled questioning, tight deadlines and the quiet but focused intervention of teaching assistants. Pupils appreciate the guidance given in their marking. However, teachers are not insistent enough that pupils take care with their spelling, handwriting and presentation.

The school has been keen to develop its curriculum. Without relaxing its focus on key skills, the school gives due emphasis to all subjects and increasingly blends them together for best effect. For example, a detailed study of the river Coquet developed pupils' knowledge and skills in geography, writing and art, as well as highlighting aspects of local culture. Even so, teachers do not always maximise all such opportunities to strengthen pupils' writing skills. The school caters well for the advancement of pupils' skills through specialist sports coaching, visiting experts, residential visits and a wide range of clubs. Provision for personal, social and health education and for pupils with special educational needs is good.

The school is a caring place. Staff are well trained in the formal procedures of care, such as first aid. They take considerable interest in the well-being of pupils and their families, especially those pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. As a result, such pupils are able to access all that the school offers. The school does well to minimise any adverse impact on progress by pupils who leave or join the school during

the school year. Management of behaviour and the promotion of attendance are both effective; attendance has improved from being low last year. Transition through the school is smooth and is eased by the mixed-year classes.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school has embraced its new status with commitment and a sense of pride. Spearheaded by the leadership of the headteacher, there has been a positive drive by the assistant headteacher and other key teachers to develop the school's provision. Such focus is now an intrinsic part of their work. Decisions are mutually agreed, innovation is encouraged and a sharp eye is kept on any shortcomings. Governors are also well involved in the school's development, but they do not evaluate the outcomes for pupils with enough rigour and double-check that the school is always making the best decisions.

The school meets all statutory requirements, including safeguarding arrangements. Regular risk assessments and thorough vetting of all adults who work with children make the school a safe place. An improved partnership with parents and carers has been evident in the take-up of workshop places and attendance at school functions. The website is up to date and informative. Links with other agencies are extensive and cover many aspects including specialist health, teaching skills, sports coaching and cultural awareness.

The school has done well to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and to minimise all kinds of discrimination. It has also succeeded in developing the various strands of community cohesion in a local and wider perspective. Interaction with the local community is mutually beneficial. The school acknowledges that further work is necessary to acquaint pupils with a wider range of British communities. Such awareness is typical of a leadership that is sensitive to the school's needs and has improved its provision and outcomes apace.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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

<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's start to school life is satisfactory. They enter school with skills and abilities that are at levels below those typical of three-year-olds, especially in language and mathematical development. By the end of Reception they are closer to expectations for their age but are still below them. They make good progress in language and calculation in the Reception class, where teaching is often good. Progress in other areas of learning and in the Nursery is satisfactory. Children's behaviour is mostly good but they sometimes forget the need to take turns and be considerate of others.

Teaching is effective when the activities motivate children and staff interact to get the best from learning opportunities. For example, in a woodland foray, one group of children learned readily about buttercups and how dandelion seeds disperse through their own investigation and adept intervention by adults. Often, though, activities are not especially inspiring and planning does not build skilfully enough on children's prior learning, even though there are clear systems for assessing children's progress. Sometimes, the reinforcement of learning is inappropriate and restricts the progress of children, especially the more able ones. The welfare arrangements are good. Children are well looked after, although they are sometimes too closely guided in the Nursery. Leaders are keen to adopt new approaches and trial new ideas but have not yet succeeded in rolling out lasting improvements across the provision.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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**

Almost half of the 65 families of pupils at the school responded to the questionnaire. Of these, most were wholly positive and praised the school's ethos, in particular the quality of care. A few parents and carers raised concerns about the mixed-year classes, the management of behaviour and communication with the school. The inspectors understand these concerns but found no evidence to suggest that these were significant issues that had an adverse impact on pupils' progress, well-being or personal development.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grange View Church of England Voluntary 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 inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 108 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	60	12	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	27	15	50	4	13	2	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	40	14	47	3	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	33	16	53	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	37	14	47	4	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	50	14	47	1	3	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)	8	27	16	53	2	7	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	33	15	50	4	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	20	16	53	5	17	3	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	27	14	47	4	13	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	8	27	16	53	3	10	2	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	30	16	53	4	13	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](http://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.

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## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



17 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange View Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School,  
Morpeth, NE61 5LZ

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. Your opinions were important to us and helped us to get to know your school that bit better.

We judge your school to be a good school. We were pleased by your positive attitudes to work and to one another, and by your good behaviour. It is good that you lead active and healthy lives, and enjoy the many activities provided by the school. You learn how to feel good about yourselves, helped by your work in the school and local community. You make good progress because teaching and the curriculum are good. Standards are about right for your age by the end of Year 4.

Your writing has improved but could be better. We would like the school to make sure that you take greater care with your handwriting, spelling and presentation, and also that you have plenty of chances to practise your writing in all the other subjects. We would also like the school to make sure that all the things that those of you in the Reception and Nursery classes do are always interesting and challenging to help you make good progress.

We think that your headteacher and the staff have done a good job in improving the school in the past two years. We hope you agree. Certainly those of you we spoke to found it hard to suggest improvements. The school has your best interests at heart and works hard to make sure that you can all take advantage of what the school offers. We would like the governors to become more involved, especially in checking that the school is always doing the right things for you.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector

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