

Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122201
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359186
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lawrence Thompson
Headteacher	Mr Mike Routledge
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 part-lessons which involved a total of nine teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors met and talked with pupils in lessons and around the school. They observed the school's work and looked at 120 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others from pupils and staff. Pupils' work and school documentation such as safeguarding information and records of pupils' progress were examined.

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

- How far the good overall effectiveness of the school has been maintained at a time of significant change.
- The extent of improvement in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.
- How successfully teaching and lessons fully stretch and challenge all groups of pupils, particularly in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and boys when reading.
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels on learning, achievement and progress.

Information about the school

Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower School is a larger-than-average first school. It is part of a hard federation with the middle school, now named the upper campus, and shares the same headteacher and governing body. There are more pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than normally found and the number with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and a very small number who speak English as an additional language. This was a parallel inspection event, in which the inspection of the upper school took place at the same time as this inspection. A separate report is published on the Ofsted website.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Haltwhistle lower is a good and improving school. The substantial changes made by the new federation are starting to make an impact, for example, self-evaluation is more rigorous and the school's systems for monitoring the quality of its work have improved. Senior leaders are making sure the school continues to move forward, they are well supported by the governing body, and the capacity to improve is good. Resources are effectively deployed to achieve good value for money.

The starting point of many children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is lower than normally found. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and attainment is average by the time they leave. Attainment has been above average for the last three years in national tests at Key Stage 1. The school knows that boys are sometimes not making as much progress in reading as girls and progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4 is not as rapid. Effective action is being taken to secure further improvements in both areas. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are constantly challenged to learn and provided with good support.

Inspection evidence confirms the school's own evaluation that the vast majority of teaching is good and better. Assessment practice has improved and the school recognises more can be done to make sure information is well used to improve pupils' work. Pupils feel safe and they are well cared for, guided and supported. The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is good. The local community makes a positive contribution to the good curriculum, for example, through the work with Northumberland National Park and local businesses. Attendance is average and the school works closely with partners to make improvements.

The quality of learning is significantly enhanced by pupils' very good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The strategies to promote community cohesion and the contribution made by pupils' to the school and community are good. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very happy with their children's experience at school. Pupils' have a strong sense of spiritual, moral, social and cultural responsibility and equality of opportunity is promoted well. The federation shares expertise to enhance the quality teaching and learning and partnerships to promote learning are good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure achievement continues to rise by further improving the rate of progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4.

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- Ensure assessment practice is always good by making sure the school's assessment strategies are consistently applied and all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' learning and progress are good because they are motivated by activities which meet their needs and interests. They enjoy learning and are keen to do well. They listen carefully and concentrate for long periods of time in lessons when the work captures their interest, particularly when engaged in practical tasks. Pupils readily ask questions when they do not understand and approach learning with positive attitudes. Teachers regularly review lesson plans to make sure learning is sufficiently challenging and the good curriculum is well matched to their needs and interests.

Pupils start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of skills which are sometimes well below what is typically expected for their age. Challenging targets are used to ensure all groups of pupils, including those with special needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and achieve well. The school is making the right changes to make progress more rapid, for example, by increasing the pace of learning in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4 and helping boys to improve their reading to match the performance of girls.

Pupils feel safe and behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle and take part in physical and other activities. Attendance is broadly average and the school works closely with partners to encourage improvements. Pupils are effectively prepared for their future lives and make a good contribution to the school and community life, for example, through charity fund raising. Their sense of spiritual, moral, and social responsibility is well developed and cultural development has improved through links with other countries, for example, with children from the Chernobyl area of Belarus.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

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' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good or better, confirming the school's own evaluation. The best teaching uses clearly understood targets which challenge pupils' thinking and develops their understanding at a good pace. Assessment practice is good and the school is taking the right action to provide clear steps which will help pupils improve their work more consistently.

The good curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and work is effectively tailored for each age group in the mixed-age classes. It is enhanced by federation support from the upper school, for example, using specialist physical education teaching. Transfer arrangements between schools are good and pupils settle in well. Partnerships are strong and foster the personal development and well-being of those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a feature of the good care, guidance and support provided by staff.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and governors have a clear vision of what the school needs to do to improve. They understand what is required to continue the upward trend of improvement, for example, by further developing the capacity of middle managers to monitor and evaluate the achievement and progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The quality of monitoring and accuracy of self-evaluation has improved and key strengths and areas for development are well known.

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Good governance is supporting and challenging the school well, as a result of more accurate information about the school's performance. Resources are well deployed and value for money is good. The promotion of equal opportunities is strong and all forms of discrimination and barriers to learning are effectively tackled. The school works well with a wide range of partners beyond the federation. The promotion of community cohesion is good because the school engages with a wider range of groups beyond the immediate community. Partnerships with other agencies and the federation promote learning well.

Child protection procedures are in place and safeguarding arrangements fully meet current government requirements. Channels for parents and carers to communicate with the school are clear and virtually all who responded to the questionnaire say they are successfully involved in decisions about their children's learning and well-being.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved since the federation was established and children make good progress. Different groups of children are thoroughly involved in their learning and the teaching ensures they achieve as well as they can. Children in the newly refurbished learning environment relate well to adults and show good levels of independence. Staff worked closely with parents and carers and children starting in the Reception class during the inspection.

Good leadership and management have resulted in better teaching and learning since the last inspection. Children's safety and welfare have the highest priority and are rigorously monitored. Good links with providers of pre-school care help children to have

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a flying start to their education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The responses from almost all parents and carers showed that they agreed that the school is well led, keeps children safe and they are happy with their child's experience at the school. A very small number of parents and carers were concerned about the progress of their children. These concerns were investigated during the inspection. Evidence confirmed that the school is taking the right action to make sure all pupils are achieving as well as they can.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	55	53	44	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	60	46	38	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	53	44	62	52	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	50	51	43	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	55	49	41	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	47	57	48	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	46	59	49	2	2	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)	54	45	57	48	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	48	56	47	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	42	59	49	7	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	39	62	52	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	48	60	50	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	58	47	39	3	3	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower School, Haltwhistle, NE49 9DP

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleague. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Haltwhistle lower is a good and improving school.
- You achieve well and make good progress.
- You feel safe and are well cared for, guided and supported.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good and the school is moving in the right direction.

Your headteacher and the staff want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- make sure you achieve as well as you can, especially in English and mathematics
- ensure you always know what you need to do to improve your work.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

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