

Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108381
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	309674
Inspection date	7 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Barry Abbott
Headteacher	Mr Peter Armstrong
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2003
School address	Broadway Whickham Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE16 5QW
Telephone number	0191 4887867
Fax number	0191 4887156

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Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- boys' achievement
- the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2
- how effectively leaders and managers monitor and evaluate pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from performance data and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils (including how pupils interact with each other and their response to what is provided for them), parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is broadly similar in size to other primary schools nationally and is set in an area which is more socially advantaged than most. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is much lower than the national average. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides a high standard of education which prepares pupils extremely well for the future both academically and personally. The vast majority of parents are extremely pleased with what the school provides. Many comment that it is an exceptional school and feel very pleased to have chosen to have their children taught there.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage as a result of the good provision. This is built on very effectively in the rest of the school through an outstanding curriculum and teaching which is consistently good and often exemplary. Lessons invariably feature very positive relationships between pupils and staff with high expectations of effort and behaviour. Teachers make lessons fun and interesting through the effective use of resources and regular opportunities for practical work and discussion. They successfully communicate their own very good subject knowledge to pupils who concentrate very well and work hard as a result. The pace and challenge in lessons enable the many very able pupils to achieve highly in every lesson. Teaching assistants work very effectively to support pupils' learning, and contribute strongly to the exceptional progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers give pupils very clear criteria for success in their work. Pupils demonstrate well developed skills in evaluating their own learning and have a good knowledge of what it takes to improve their work. This is one of the reasons for their rapid progress.

Despite high standards at the end of both key stages over a number of years, the school is not complacent. Leaders and managers have acted swiftly to address the imbalance in the standards attained between boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2007. Additional resources have been purchased, targeted support provided and the curriculum adapted to include a higher ratio of practical tasks in lessons. As a result, boys and girls do equally well throughout the school.

Outstanding care includes robust safeguarding procedures and excellent levels of guidance and support. These contribute greatly to pupils feeling safe and secure, and in turn to their academic and personal success. Valuing others is embedded in the school's ethos and through the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident in their response to the many opportunities to raise funds or be involved in the work of charities, and in the pride they demonstrate in their various roles of responsibility including that of the school council. The pupils have a high degree of self-confidence and self-esteem; they behave outstandingly well. Their enjoyment is evident in their consistently above average attendance. Pupils are very aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. There are exceptional opportunities for them to take part in sporting activities and levels of participation, and enjoyment are high. Every day brings exciting learning opportunities; during early morning sessions the hall is full with pupils of all ages engaged in the discipline of karate, at lunchtimes younger pupils can be seen engrossed in mastering the skills of chess and after school both girls and boys enter with enthusiasm into the rigours of Irish dancing. Some are less enthusiastic, however, about making healthy eating choices, still preferring to eat the things they like best rather than those which they know are better for them.

Excellent self-evaluation enables the school to have an accurate view of its effectiveness. This is used very effectively to focus on key areas for improvement. For example, the school has recognised that systems to track pupils' progress need to be further refined so that the

information gained can be used quickly to plan actions to maintain the rate of progress made by pupils. Governors play a full part in the school's strategic leadership and effective management. The headteacher and the school's leadership team are successful in providing the highest quality academic and personal education for each pupil. As such, the school is in an excellent position to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter Reception with the skills, attitudes and knowledge above those typical of their age. Due to good teaching, they make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, the majority have reached and most have exceeded the goals expected for five year olds. Children settle happily into the routines of school and are confident to discuss their work, demonstrating good levels of confidence when choosing activities from the broad range available. The balance between adult-led activities and those initiated by children has improved with children encouraged to make choices for themselves. This lays a firm foundation for their future development as independent learners. Opportunities to weave the development of early literacy and numeracy skills into chosen activities are however sometimes missed in teachers planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no major issues additional to those already identified in the current school improvement plan.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School, Gateshead, NE16 5QW

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school. I would especially like to thank the pupils who met with me to talk about their views on the school and the many individual pupils who made a point of talking to me.

I agree with you, your parents and carers, that yours is an outstanding school because you learn very well and reach high standards. It was good to see how happy you are in lessons and how hard you work. This is because you are taught very well by teachers who make learning interesting and fun. You told me that you are cared for exceptionally well and I could see how much confidence this gave you in all that you do. The school provides you with a wide variety of excellent activities and you respond very positively, especially to those activities which help you to stay fit and active.

Your school is led exceptionally well by your headteacher, senior staff and governors. They are improving even further the way in which they check on how you are doing so that you all continue to reach the standards of which you are capable.

I wish you the very best for your future!

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector