



Stakeford First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122178
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281177
Inspection dates 27 April 2006 to 28 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Heather Evans

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

Type of school	First	School address	East Ford Road
School category	Community		Stakeford
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		Choppington, Northumberland
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01670 812369
Number on roll	144	Fax number	01670 816388
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jacqueline Rowell
Date of previous inspection	1 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hall

Age group 3 to 9	Inspection dates 27 April 2006 - 28 April 2006	Inspection number 281177
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized first school. There have been three headteachers in the past four years. The most recent was appointed in September 2005. There are 109 pupils on roll and another 35 attend part-time in the Nursery. The number entitled to free school meals is about average, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all of the pupils are of white British heritage and none speaks a language other than English as their first language. On entry to the Nursery, attainment is below that usually found for children of the same age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence supports the view of the staff and governors that this school is satisfactory overall. Recent initiatives are moving several aspects towards being good. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress and attain the expected learning goals for children of this age. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Some Year 4 pupils are on course to exceed this level. Academically, pupils from all backgrounds and abilities achieve satisfactorily. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets national requirements. The process of checking how well the school is doing and improving provision is well in hand. Strategies to improve skills in speaking, listening, writing and reading are showing positive results for all pupils. Work with the local community and with outside agencies is good. The pastoral care provided for all pupils, including those with gifts or talents, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. Teaching is satisfactory. The pace of some lessons is too slow and results in high attaining pupils, in particular, not learning as quickly as they might. The tracking of individual progress, target setting and marking as part of the assessment strategy are satisfactory overall, but senior staff now have to ensure that procedures are used consistently by teachers. Parents, pupils and the local community hold the school in high regard. The issues identified by the previous inspection have been addressed. Finances are managed carefully and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of the leadership and management team work well together and the school is well placed to move forward.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the effective procedures for tracking, marking, assessment and target setting are used consistently throughout the school.
- Quicken the pace of lessons to provide increased levels of challenge for pupils, especially those with the potential for high attainment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Children enter the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and reach standards typical for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Personal, social and emotional development is strong. By Years 2 and 4, standards are average and progress is satisfactory. The results of national tests for Year 2 pupils show that standards are stronger in mathematics than in reading. To remedy this, teachers have introduced a number of good initiatives aimed at raising standards in speaking, listening and reading. Across the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations.

Standards improved year-on-year from 2001 until they were well above average in 2004. However, in 2005 standards fell to average. This fall in standards corresponded to a time of change, and the school reports that staff morale was adversely affected. This in turn affected the quality of teaching and learning. The situation is now much more stable, morale is higher and standards are beginning to rise again. However, the pace of some lessons is too slow to promote good progress among high attaining pupils.

Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. This is because they receive good support from a caring, conscientious team of assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development; including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well, show courtesy and respect for others and are excited by the many enrichment activities provided for them. Pupils settle well to lessons and usually concentrate hard. Attendance is average. All pupils know that a healthy lifestyle such as regular exercise and a good, balanced diet is important. Pupils play safely and have a clear idea of what is right and wrong. All pupils are keen to work and play with others and welcome newcomers warmly. As one parent put it, 'This is a friendly school; really it is like a big family. I like the way the older ones help the younger ones.'

Through the effective 'Healthy School Council' and its procedures, all pupils know about citizenship. They make good contributions to school and community. Satisfactory standards in basic skills mean that pupils are soundly placed for their future schooling and the world of work. In personal, social and health education lessons and assembly, pupils reflect thoughtfully on a wide range of issues. They know a lot about their local culture and have a keen understanding of other cultures and traditions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with examples of good practice. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are predominantly good. The teaching and learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of all subjects and lesson planning is good. They use well-informed teaching assistants to support and extend learning for all pupils satisfactorily. ICT is used to make lessons interesting. In some lessons, however, pupils' learning slows when teachers repeat past work because they do not use the school's assessment information effectively. This slower pace means that some pupils do not learn enough in some lessons, especially the most capable pupils. Teachers make good use of practical investigations in

mathematics and science to help pupils learn. In English, work planned to develop pupils' skills in phonics is beginning to help improve standards in reading and writing. Work in school is extended satisfactorily through a regular programme of homework.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of learners satisfactorily and has some good features. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and is firmly based on learning through activity. Overall, the school places an emphasis on making learning an enjoyable experience and ensuring that pupils acquire basic skills in English, mathematics and science satisfactorily. The weakness in curriculum planning for English has been addressed and the changes are beginning to raise standards. Pupils are being given clear information about how to keep safe, to be healthy and to accept responsibility through, for example, being a member of the 'Healthy School Council'.

The curriculum is enriched through a good range of after-school activities, particularly sport. Pupils also enjoy a wide variety of educational trips, especially the residential visit to the Lake District. These activities are successful in fostering an interest in learning and contribute immensely to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school graded this as satisfactory; evidence shows that work this year has lifted this aspect to good. Pastoral care is good. All adults are committed to promoting safe practices and several healthy eating awards have been achieved. The school works well with parents and other agencies. Child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out rigorously. Strategies for measuring pupils' progress and identifying what they need to do to improve their work, introduced during the present academic year, are having a positive impact on progress. Pupils are rising to each new challenge with delight and enjoyment. Older pupils understand what they have to do to attain higher standards in mathematics and English. However, the new assessment systems are not implemented consistently by all teachers.

Anti-bullying procedures are effective. Pupils report that whilst there was a problem with bullying in the past, any instances that now arise are dealt with very effectively so that problems are resolved. The care and support given to pupils with learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties are good. This enables them to feel safe, secure and learn satisfactorily.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school reports that changes in the past few years caused disruption to the work of the school. The leaders and managers of the school have undertaken a thorough evaluation of the standards and provision,

and have correctly judged most elements as being satisfactory overall. Some good features are now emerging. The headteacher has a clear view of where there are strengths and what needs to be improved, and her vision is shared by everyone working in the school. The entire teaching team is committed to bring about the necessary improvements with a practical sense of urgency. A well structured programme of monitoring and support has improved the quality of teaching. This is helping to improve pupils' learning and is beginning to raise standards. Across the school, morale and aspirations have been raised. The school has suitable systems for tracking pupils' progress and for setting targets for their achievement. Senior managers have not yet ensured that these are used with the consistency necessary to make them an effective tool to help raise standards.

There is good delegation of management responsibilities. The staff work together enthusiastically and have forged an effective partnership with the headteacher. Subject coordinators have made positive strides and now lead their subjects well. They know where practices need to be improved and have the will and capacity to bring about the required changes. Parents value what the staff are doing for their children and are supportive of the school.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is fully involved in the well-organised plans for improvement. Governors are very alert to the need for holding the school to account. They fully support what the new management team is seeking to achieve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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The Children and Pupils

Stakeford First School

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27 April 2006

Dear Children and Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school to see how you work and play with your friends and listen to your teachers. We enjoyed our visit very much. We found out a lot of things and these are some of the best things we saw.

Your school is a happy, friendly place, but you know that already because you told us how much you enjoy school. It was good to see you all coming in smiling and ready to work and learn together. It is good to see that you get on well with one another in lessons and when playing outside. You have a good understanding about healthy living, caring for the environment and helping one another.

You have begun to do better work in lessons. Most of you come to school every day except when you are ill. You have learned that by behaving well, everything you do is better, and that lessons are good fun so that everyone can learn.

Your teachers are planning together to find ways to make your school even better. They have already made some changes to achieve this. To make your work and play better, your teachers have made a list and they are working hard to put things right. They are going to need your help to do this. You have already begun to write down your personal targets in English and mathematics, and your teachers are going to be very careful in recording all of your achievements, and letting each one of you know what you are good at and where you need to work harder, so that you can improve still further. They want to fit more work into every lesson. This means that you will need to listen carefully and be ready with interesting answers. Lessons are going to be busier and more exciting for every one of you.

Thank you again for letting us listen to your ideas and share in your work and play.

Best wishes

Heather Evans
Lead Inspector