

Stakeford First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122178
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327647
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jacqueline Rowell
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hall
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	East Ford Road Stakeford Choppington Northumberland NE62 5TZ
Telephone number	01670 812369
Fax number	01670 816388

Age group	3–9
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Inspection number	327647

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a below average size first school situated on the outskirts of Ashington. It serves an area experiencing increasing social and economic deprivation. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and a very small minority of pupils have a statement of special educational need. A very small number of pupils are from the Traveller community. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has achieved the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils have access to a range of after school clubs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Its strengths are in the pupils' personal development and in the good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher and her staff know the pupils well. This has resulted in a good level of care for vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most parents are supportive of the school and speak highly of the welcoming, friendly atmosphere which 'contributes to a positive learning environment'.

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. When children start school their level of development is below that which is typical for their age group. The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage means children rapidly become active learners and achieve well. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards are average in Year 2 and when they leave in Year 4, pupils are working within the levels expected for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable receive good quality support and achieve well. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good. This is because teachers do not always make sufficient use of information on pupils' progress to plan sufficiently challenging work for the most able. As a result, the progress of higher attaining pupils is inconsistent. Throughout the school, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in English because there are insufficient opportunities for them to extend their writing skills across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are good and, as a result, pupils are well behaved and manage their emotions well. All pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. They make a good contribution to the community through their involvement in fund raising for a wide range of charities and through their productive involvement in the school council. Pupils enjoy school and this is best summed up in the words of a pupil who reported 'It's an exciting school where we learn lots of new things'. The curriculum is satisfactory. The varied range of activities outside lessons is appreciated by pupils. Visits and visitors, and the effective partnerships which have been developed with some organisations and parents, extend learning and contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Although their writing skills are weaker than they could be, pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of education.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently formed leadership team, has signposted a clear turning point in the school's development. With the support of the local authority they have put a clear and carefully planned agenda for improvement in place which is beginning to accelerate pupils' progress. Senior leaders are improving their skills although currently they do not always have enough opportunities to ensure they have a fully informed view of how well the school is performing. Governors are well informed and they support the school well through new initiatives. For example, they have made certain there is a good range of resources to support pupils' learning in information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in school because the provision is good. Their personal development is good. Children quickly develop into confident, articulate individuals who learn

to concentrate and enjoy learning. Most parents are pleased with the start their children make. Children are well cared for and the school fulfils all statutory Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirements. Staff work and plan together effectively as a team to provide high quality learning experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom, which make learning fun. For example, 'The Stakeford Toy Shop' and 'Bob the Builder Workshop' excite and inspire children. Adults make regular observations and assessments to plan the next steps of learning for each individual. As a result, there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those from which children can choose. Consequently, children make good progress in relation to their starting points. By the end of Reception most children achieve average standards for their age. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable children achieve well because of the effective adult support. Leadership and management are good and there are detailed plans in place to improve outdoor provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of information about pupils' progress to plan for the more able pupils.
- Extend opportunities for writing in all subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for new senior leaders to find out how well the school is doing and steer school improvement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and the achievement of pupils is satisfactory. In 2008, standards were average for Year 2 pupils, except in mathematics where they were above average. Pupils made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Generally, pupils maintain their rate of progress so that they leave school at the end of Year 4 with average standards, with particular strength in reading. Higher attaining pupils performed well in reading although they did not do as well in writing and mathematics. Throughout the school standards in writing are too low because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write across the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils make good progress because of the well planned, targeted support they receive. Although there is some variation in the attainment of boys and girls there is no recognisable pattern.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. By the time they leave the school in Year 4 they are well rounded, assured individuals who are proud of their achievements. They behave well because relationships are good and they know what is expected of them. Pupils demonstrate maturity and responsibility combined with good attitudes and commitment to their work. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in average and improving levels of attendance. Pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They say they feel safe and are confident issues such as bullying would not be tolerated. Pupils take a pride in their contributions to the community. They act responsibly as 'Sunbeams', sing in the local church and support the work of a range of charities. Their

literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory but well developed social skills stand them in good stead for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some good teaching. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. Pupils say they enjoy lessons and teachers work conscientiously to engage their interest. For example, in a good Year 1 writing lesson pupils made good progress in their ability to invent interesting sentences about 'The Three Little Pigs' because teaching was brisk and expectations high. Generally, lessons are well planned and resources, including ICT, are used well to enrich learning. Where teaching is less effective planning does not clearly identify the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Where this is the case, the pace of learning is slower and the level of pupils' engagement less secure. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide high quality, targeted support. This means pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to play a full part in lessons and achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets all statutory requirements and provides pupils with a range of experiences which they enjoy. For example, pupils talked excitedly about how much they enjoy learning Spanish, taking part in 'Whole School Challenges' and developing their knowledge through special events such as 'Greek' and 'Pirate' days'. Personal, social and health education contributes positively to their behaviour and helps them to learn to work and play happily together. The school provides a range of visits and visitors. These include visits out of school to Ridley Hall and Robinwood, as well as specialist sports tuition. The opportunities for learning beyond the classroom are good and pupils are keen to attend the sporting and creative activities which are available. The curriculum's main weakness is the lack of opportunities it provides for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects. As a result, standards in English are too low.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The good links with outside agencies ensure pupils with particular needs are supported well. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are fully in place. Induction arrangements are good and this helps pupils new to the school settle in quickly and feel part of the school community. Expectations for the behaviour of pupils are high within a caring environment in which all feel valued and supported. The school has been particularly successful in helping pupils at risk of exclusion to engage in their learning. The school has a good partnership with parents and this supports learning well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school regularly tracks pupils' progress but teachers do not always use this information well enough to plan sufficient challenge for the most able.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and this has helped establish a good team spirit in the school. Consequently, the school has maintained a focus on raising standards during a period of significant change. The present senior team has only recently become established. Self-evaluation procedures are effective. Recent development of the skills of senior leaders is enabling them to make a fuller contribution to evaluating the school's work. However, they are at an early stage in developing this aspect of their role in checking that changes are productive. Governors have a clear vision for the development of the school. They know the school well and play a part in planning its development. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. Senior leaders have identified the need to further develop links with the wider world and a precise action plan has been implemented. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and it has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stakeford First School, Northumberland, NE62 5TZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed spending time with you and listening to your views about your school and why you enjoy learning. I was impressed with your good behaviour and the thoughtful way in which you look after each other. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and I was pleased to see how hard you work with your teachers and other adults. The staff take good care of you and many of you told me how kind the adults are and how safe you feel in school. You develop into confident, well mannered children with a good awareness of right and wrong. Many of you help with the running of your school, for example, by serving on the school council or by acting as 'Sunbeams'. Well done! You told me how much you enjoy the after school clubs, such as art and ICT, and special events such as 'The Farmhouse Breakfast Day'. I also know you appreciate the visits out of school which help make your curriculum interesting.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. Most of you are reaching the standards expected for your age. I found that you made satisfactory progress in your learning but some of you could be challenged further with harder work. You need, however, more opportunities to develop your writing skills in different subjects. I have asked the school to improve checks on how things are going so that staff with responsibilities can steer development more easily. You can help by always doing your best and continuing to involve yourselves fully in the life of the school.

Thank you again for welcoming me to your school. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Armstrong

Lead inspector