

West Woodburn First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122190
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327653
Inspection date	29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Bannon

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	30
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	Mr Frank Charlton
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Beavers
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West Woodburn Hexham Northumberland NE48 2RX
Telephone number	01434 270220
Fax number	01434 270220

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

West Woodburn First School stands in a beautiful rural location. It is much smaller than most schools with very small numbers in each year group. Most pupils live in the village; others travel from a wide area. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is below average. Average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but a higher than average number has a statement of special educational need. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided in the Reception class. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Activemark Award. It is a fully extended school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Woodburn First School is a satisfactory school that cares for its pupils well and helps them develop good personal skills. 'Everyone is happy here' was a typical comment from one satisfied parent. Attainment on entry to Reception varies considerably from year-to-year because of the small numbers in each year group. Generally, these entry standards for cohorts are broadly typical for children of their age. By the time learners leave the school standards remain broadly average, making satisfactory achievement from their starting points. The attainment of learners currently in Year 2 is average. The attainment of learners by the end of Year 4 remains broadly average, which shows satisfactory progress from entry to school and the end of Year 2.

Personal development is good. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy coming to school. In response to the questionnaire, parents were generally happy with the school but a minority expressed concerns about behaviour. However, during the inspection no evidence was found to support these concerns and behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe in school and are able to talk to adults about a problem if necessary. They take part in swimming each week and are well aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle. They are adequately prepared, with average basic skills, for the next stage in their education.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the local community by taking part in the village litter-pick and invite older members of the community to school events. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. Children settle in quickly in Reception because of good links with parents and partners such as pre-school settings. Children's welfare is supported effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this continues to be a strength throughout school. Child protection procedures are in place and the school works well with outside agencies to care for vulnerable pupils. A particular strength is the regular marking and good quality pupil tracking that provides effective academic guidance. Learners, including those in Reception are taught in mixed age classes. This is necessary because of the very small numbers of pupils. There is currently a lack of resources in terms of a teaching assistant and displays and equipment to ensure good progress with the younger learners. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a variety of visits and visitors. Good links with partner schools ensure that physical education is adequate.

Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Relationships are good and teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to provide initial stimulus to learning. However, the pupils' attention occasionally drifts from their learning because teachers do not consistently ensure that they are individually challenged and required to do enough independent work. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school runs smoothly and is led by a headteacher who focuses on important priorities and generally evaluates the school accurately. She makes good use of partnerships to widen provision and has improved assessment and tracking. However, despite the school's efforts, the overall quality of teaching and learning is not currently effective enough to bring about good achievement. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Links with the village and local community are strong but the school does not yet have national or international links. The school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils but this is sometimes hampered by budget constraints.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are keen to be involved in the work of the school and are highly committed. They are still in the early stages of appreciating the implications of

national assessment data in holding the school to account more rigorously. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory. Attainment on entry is broadly typical of that expected for children of this age. By the time they leave Reception, standards are generally in line with the national average, except in reading and some aspects of personal, social and emotional development in which they are below average. Standards are above average in speaking and listening and writing. Currently, standards are improving in all areas of learning due to the impact of the 'learning journals'. These notebooks give parents a key role in working with their children at home recording their children's progress with notes and photographs. This information is used effectively to supplement assessments in school. Children's personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They understand about keeping safe, for example, awareness of the dangers of electricity. They learn to take turns when playing numeracy games and enjoy playing with older pupils in the mixed-age class. Occasionally, the lack of support to help children develop their confidence in using ICT reduces progress. Learning and development are satisfactory. Work is in progress to develop a well resourced outdoor area; this is not yet available for the children. Children work as a distinct group for most of their time and sometimes alongside other Key Stage 1 pupils. The latter is less effective because resources to add excitement and enjoyment in learning are limited. There is a lack of displays around the classroom to support and extend children's independent learning, for example, key vocabulary and the sounds and letters children are currently learning. Arrangements to assess children's progress are developing well. The arrangements to ensure children's welfare are good. Staff are fully trained and risk assessments are in place for outdoor activities. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Raise standards in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Improve resources so as to challenge learners more effectively in Reception and Key Stage 1.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Achievement is satisfactory but the small sizes of each year group lead to variations in attainment. Over time the progress of pupils in all year groups is satisfactory. Standards in national assessments in Year 2 were below average in 2007 and 2008 but these pupils made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Standards in Year 4 were broadly average at the end of 2008. Progress was good in reading and writing and satisfactory in mathematics. Standards for pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 4 are average. They are making satisfactory progress since starting school. The school has improved its tracking systems since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is monitored and evaluated rigorously and the targets set are challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as the rest.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. There is a good focus on spiritual development and pupils respond to this by being reflective in assemblies and saying prayers at lunchtime. They show a good sense of right and wrong, get on well together and learn well about other cultures. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. They behave well in lessons and respond well in assemblies. They are keen to learn but attention occasionally drifts when teachers do not have high enough expectations and lessons lack challenge. Pupils act safely and sensibly around the school. For the most part they get on well together. They show a good awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and act upon it. The school council plays a positive role, for example it has requested better provision for outdoor games and playground toys. The pupils make a positive contribution to the local community by putting on concerts, collecting for charities and offering harvest festival provisions. Their broadly average standards of attainment prepare them adequately for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and work hard for them. They use new technology effectively to present information and motivate pupils. Marking is regular and teachers offer clear advice for improvement. In most lessons teachers plan work so that most pupils may progress according to their needs. Where the challenge is good and teachers and other staff are able to work closely with pupils to check progress rigorously the learning is good. However, when teachers do not focus sufficiently on providing opportunities and monitoring the progress of pupils in lessons then progress is satisfactory. There is sometimes a lack of resources to ensure work is sufficiently challenging for all, particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1. Occasionally there is insufficient demand for pupils to use subject specific knowledge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Literacy and numeracy have an appropriate priority. Pupils' learning in history is enriched by visits to places of historical interest such as Eden Camp and in natural history by visiting a rare bird sanctuary. Partnership working with the local cluster of schools contributes well to enriching provision for physical activities, reflected in the Activemark award. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Visits to the local middle school are helping to prepare pupils for their next stage of education. There are currently no after school clubs running, although pupils can travel to a nearby village to take part in football. Lunchtime clubs take place to enhance pupils' learning. There are satisfactory links with the local community, exemplified by the visit to see rare birds and performances, such as carol services in the village.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff are fully committed to the well being of the pupils in their charge. Parents are happy with the levels of care for their children within the school. Child protection procedures and risk assessment are in place. Where necessary, the school makes good use of outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Induction procedures are good. Pupils settle in quickly and meaningful links with middle schools for events such as concerts and competitions as well as the formal transfer procedures ensure smooth transition at the end of Year 4. Staff assess pupils accurately and provide good advice how to improve. Good individual support is in place for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the headteacher has instigated improvements in procedures such as using assessment more effectively to help pupils improve. Planning has also focused on suitable areas such as improving outdoor provision and achievement in writing. The school generally evaluates itself accurately and is correct to link evaluations to improved achievement and challenging targets have been set across subjects. However, achievement has not improved substantially because the effectiveness of teaching is not sufficient to promote consistently good quality learning and achievement. The sound effectiveness of past improvements indicates that there is satisfactory capacity for improvement. The school has the commitment to be inclusive and promote equality of opportunity but in terms of resource implications younger pupils sometimes lose out. Action to promote community cohesion is satisfactory and improving but local links are much stronger than others. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have the interest of the school at heart and regularly visit the school to monitor and support its work but there are weaknesses in their awareness of data analysis. They are keen to attend training so as to be better informed about judging achievement.

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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?	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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	3

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	2
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

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Woodburn First School, Northumberland, NE48 2RX

You may recall that Mrs Rodger and I inspected your school recently. This letter is to let you know that I found your school to be a satisfactory school that cares for you well and helps you develop good personal qualities. You have a good sense of right and wrong and get along well together. You think carefully about the consequences of what you do and have knowledge about other communities and peoples.

We found that you enjoy school and feel safe. You are well behaved and your attendance is good. You know how to stay healthy and make a good effort to help those around you in the community. You are adequately prepared for your move into middle school. You are doing reasonably well in your lessons and tests but everyone would like you to do even better. Your teachers and other staff work hard and want to do the best for you. We have asked them to make the following things happen.

- That lessons allow you all to learn well and improve your work.
- That there are enough resources and teaching assistants to support your teachers so that you can improve even more by the time you leave Year 2.
- That you all do even better in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly before you leave Year 2.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Bannon

Lead inspector