

Ashington Wansbeck First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122239
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	340110
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Allan Lacey HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Smith
Headteacher	Mr M Spencer
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
School address	Wansbeck Road Ashington Northumberland NE63 8HZ
Telephone number	01670 812324
Fax number	01670 817146
Email address	admin@wansbeck.northumberland.sch.uk

Age group	3–9
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Inspection number	340110

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors saw nine teachers, observed 18 lessons and undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. They held meetings with staff, governors, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked in detail at the following: the school's development plan and safeguarding policies; the school's data on pupils' progress; assessment records and case studies and minutes of various meetings, including those of the governing body. The inspectors also analysed the 104 questionnaires returned by parents and carers of pupils at the school.

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

- the quality of teaching and how well assessment information is used by teachers in enabling pupils to do as well as they are able
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels including the governing body in driving improvement.
- the progress and achievement of all pupils relative to their starting points
- how well pupils' attitudes and their behaviour help them learn and make progress.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average first school. The school is part of the Ashington Learning Partnership Trust that consists of five schools that provide for pupils aged 3 to 18 years. The school is hard federated with one governing body supported by a school advisory group. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is at the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. The remaining pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The school holds the Healthy Schools and the International Schools awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Ashington Wansbeck First School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Strong relationships between adults and pupils are evident in lessons and around the school. The vast majority of pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. Parents are supportive of the school; typical comments include. 'We feel that our son is really flourishing here, the teachers are excellent and the children really enjoy their learning.'

Children characteristically enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge at levels broadly expected for their age. By the time they leave reception, their attainment is slightly above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and attainment at the end of Year 4 is broadly average.

In the large majority of lessons, teaching is of a satisfactory quality with an increasing proportion that is good. The best lessons fully motivate and engage the pupils in their learning. Pupils are actively involved and make good progress in these lessons.

However, occasionally the pace of lessons slackens because teachers talk for too long. Some teachers use assessment information effectively to match work to pupils' ability, but this is not always the case and leads to a few lessons lacking the appropriate pace and challenge. In some lessons, pupils are not always given sufficiently clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Work is marked promptly, but marking does not always identify clearly what pupils need to do next to improve.

Support staff make a very good contribution to learning because they are well informed about the needs of the pupils they support.

Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes towards work strongly support their learning in class. Pupils are polite and show respect and consideration for each other and visitors to the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are reflective and show a good level of understanding and respect for other people's feelings. Pupils' appreciation and celebration of the diverse cultures that characterise contemporary Britain is less well developed. Pupils' punctuality is good and attendance is at the national average.

The principal provides satisfactory leadership and is well supported by the recently appointed senior management team and the Executive Director of the Ashington Learning Partnership. This team is working successfully to focus staff on raising standards and to improve the rate of pupils' progress. School self-evaluation is effective in providing leaders with a developed view of what needs to be done to improve. However, analysis and evaluation of how teaching is impacting on how well pupils are achieving is not yet rigorous enough. The monitoring of teaching and learning is comprehensive.

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

However, it focuses too much on what the teacher is doing and not enough on pupils' learning and achievement. The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. They are well informed and provide a good balance of challenge and support. However, their monitoring of policies and procedures specific to the school is underdeveloped. For example, although the school is a very harmonious community, the school's duties to promote community cohesion are at an early stage of development in relation to audit and evaluation. The school has benefited significantly from the support given by the Ashington Learning Partnership and this is beginning to have significant impact upon standards at the school. Given the balance of strengths and areas for further development school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning and hence pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring that the pace of all lessons is suitably brisk and challenging
 - ensuring that all teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and carefully guide the pupils through the small steps which help ensure effective learning
 - improving the effectiveness of lesson observations by consistently focussing on the learning and progress of all pupils
 - improving the sharpness of the analysis of how well pupils progress and building this information more effectively into the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Further develop the promotion of community cohesion, by:
 - carrying out a comprehensive audit of the school's own religious, ethnic and socio-economic context
 - planning appropriate steps to promote community cohesion in the local and wider contexts so that pupils extend their knowledge of different cultures
 - evaluating the impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The standards attained by pupils are average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall in their learning. Some pupils, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. This good progress is steadily becoming the case with an increasing number of pupils at the school. In lessons, pupils show good concentration and perseverance when completing their work.

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

Pupils' responses to the inspection questionnaire were positive, highlighting how much they enjoy school. For example one pupil said, 'I like this school, I like the lessons that make you think really hard!' They say that they like taking part in school visits and think the new developments to the curriculum are interesting and fun. Pupils readily take on additional responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. They also express confidence about moving onto the middle school and feel they are well prepared. Pupils' moral and social development is good and is reflected in their positive attitudes towards school and each other and in their good behaviour and conduct around the school. Pupils' appreciation and celebration of the diverse cultures that characterise contemporary Britain is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, although a significant proportion seen during the inspection was good. When teaching is good learning is well planned, with interesting and challenging tasks that engage the pupils, who consequently work at a brisk pace and make good progress. In most lessons, teachers and their assistants motivate pupils well by

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

identifying and praising their achievements. On occasions, teaching is less effective because teachers' introductions are too long and limit the time available for pupils to work on their own. In some lessons, pupils are not routinely involved in assessing their own learning, which results in occasions when they are unclear about what they need to do to improve their work. Marking in pupils' books is completed regularly and often includes encouragement. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of advice it provides to indicate the next step in learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory although improving and offers a suitable range of activities for the pupils. The recently introduced thematic curriculum is the result of a good deal of innovative and imaginative work by the staff and is successfully increasing pupils' enjoyment of their learning. Opportunities for them to use their literacy and numeracy skills within the new curriculum are growing. However, there are less well developed opportunities for pupils to develop information and communication technology skills and knowledge.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. From the time children start in the Nursery class, adults work hard to foster good relationships with all children. There are no exclusions and the school has effective links with outside agencies and neighbouring schools. Staff know the pupils well and are keen to provide any additional help that is required. The good work of the staff in this area ensures that pupils are well cared for and that the systems to safeguard pupils are satisfactory.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leadership team is securely focused on improving the quality of provision as the basis for raising standards. They have a developing understanding of where improvement is required the most and have introduced a number of important changes and support strategies to bring this about. However, they recognise that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching needs to be more focused upon the pupils' learning and achievement if the provision is to be improved further. The governing body is both knowledgeable and supportive. Some of its members have an in-depth awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are not afraid to hold the leaders to account. The governors have yet to establish a fully effective monitoring role in some areas of the schools' work.

Parents and carers are regularly consulted and are encouraged to play a full part in the

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

learning and personal development of their children. Links between home and school to support the pupils' learning and development are of a satisfactory quality.

The school is inclusive, seeking always to treat all pupils fairly and equally.

The school has developed productive partnerships with other organisations that enhance provision for vulnerable pupils and enrich the curriculum in areas such as art and music. Although the school is a very harmonious community, the school's duties to promote community cohesion beyond it are at an early stage of development. The school's systems to safeguard pupils are of satisfactory quality with all staff being suitably trained in all key areas.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are generally in line with those expected for their age. They quickly grow in confidence, becoming keen explorers and learners by the time they enter Year 1. Children are making good progress and many start Year 1 with skills in some areas which are above those expected by this time. This is due to consistently good teaching.

Children acquire the skills they need for the future well. These are developed through the consistent use of routines, giving children responsibility for small tasks and allowing them to initiate their own activities, so that they can be confident enough to make appropriate decisions and choices. Children demonstrate how to stay safe and healthy through their good behaviour. Relationships between peers, children and adults are very good. Excellent positive adult role models reinforce and develop this further.

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

Assessment is increasingly used effectively throughout by all staff, who monitor and record children's progress well. Group and individual observations are utilised effectively to plan activities that extend children's learning. The good leadership gives a clear direction, with a strong focus on achievement. Transition arrangements, both into and out of the provision are strong and these are closely linked to the good relationships with parents and carers. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage takes every opportunity to refine and enhance practice further.

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 large majority of parents and carers that responded to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with the school's work. They report that their children enjoy school, the teaching is good and that their children are kept safe. A very large majority feel that their children are making enough progress and that they are well prepared for the future. Many parents and carers commented specifically on the role of the principal in bringing about positive changes to the school. A small minority of parents raised issues regarding the school keeping them informed about their child's progress and the help they receive from the school in support their child's learning. Evidence gained during the inspection indicated that there is satisfactory provision in both areas. A small minority of parents raised issues regarding how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Evidence gained during the inspection indicated the school had satisfactory procedures and strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and inspectors judged behaviour in the school as good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashington Wansbeck First 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 416 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	56	41	39	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	54	45	43	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	18	60	58	21	20	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	29	62	60	8	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	34	60	58	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	35	54	52	11	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	39	59	57	2	2	1	1
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)	49	47	50	48	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	35	64	62	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	25	58	56	15	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	30	55	53	7	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	32	59	57	3	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	35	60	58	3	3	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ashington Wansbeck First School, Ashington, NE63 8HZ

On behalf of the other inspectors and myself, thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking with you about your school.

You should be proud because you are very polite and your behaviour is good. Most of you say you feel safe and all of you appreciate the care that all adults show to you. You told us that lessons were usually fun and we agree with you.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You make a good start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. You make satisfactory progress in lessons in the rest of the school, and reach standards in English and mathematics that are typical for your age at the end of Year 4.

We have asked the people in charge at your school and the teachers to make sure that they watch carefully how you are doing in lessons and how the teaching is helping you to learn. We have also asked them to think of ways to make your lessons even more interesting and how they can help you understand your next steps in learning when they mark your work. We have also asked them to make sure you have opportunities to learn about different people and cultures in Britain and the world.

You can help the teachers by continuing to follow their advice on improving your own work, always trying hard and having fun.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allan Lacey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.