

Corbridge Church of England Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122287
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327687
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Mrs Barbara Hudson

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Prof Ann Kenny
Headteacher	Mrs Ali Barden
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	St Helen's Lane Corbridge Northumberland NE45 5JQ
Telephone number	01434 632534
Fax number	01434 634568

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Corbridge Church of England First School caters for pupils between the ages of three and nine-years. The Early Years Foundation Stage has a mornings-only Nursery and a full-time Reception class. The school is smaller than average and situated in an area of relatively high social and economic advantage. Most of the pupils are of White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. There is a privately run Kids Club on the school site which provides before- and after-school care and holiday care. This is inspected and reported on separately by Ofsted. The school has achieved many nationally recognised awards such as the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It very successfully places an equal emphasis on pupils' academic, creative and personal development. Pupils flourish in a very caring, nurturing, interesting and exciting environment. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. They make an excellent contribution to the community and acquire an excellent range of skills to help them in their next stage of education. Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and they recognise the excellent work the staff do in encouraging their children to do their best.

Standards are very high and pupils' achievement is excellent. Children make an exceptionally good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the outstanding provision. Children make excellent progress and most enter Year 1 with skills well above average. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is outstanding and pupils achieve standards that are consistently, significantly better than average. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to make excellent progress and the standards they attain are very much higher than those expected for their age. Standards are consistently better in reading and writing than in mathematics. This is because the pupils' targets and the marking of their work are not as focused in mathematics as they are in writing. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groups make excellent progress because of the exceptionally good support they receive from staff in the school.

Pupils' learning is outstanding because of the excellent teaching. Teachers have very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve in their work and behaviour, and provide interesting lessons. Pupils benefit from the outstanding relationships they have with their teachers and support staff; this helps them to become very keen, motivated learners who apply themselves very well to the work that they are given to complete. The curriculum is outstanding. It is very rich and provides the pupils with many wonderful experiences in school time, through a wide range of clubs, many visits and visitors. Community cohesion is well provided for in the curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities to work and play together and learn about different communities. The school provides outstanding levels of care and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The excellent headteacher has a highly effective team of senior managers and governors. Together they accurately evaluate the work of the school. They celebrate successes and work rigorously until weaknesses are eradicated. The school has continued to make very good progress since the last inspection. The school has an excellent capacity to improve because all concerned strive to make this very successful school even better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children enter the Nursery, their development varies widely and, on balance, is around that typical for this age group. Due to a very good induction programme, children settle quickly and they get an excellent start to their education. Teaching is based on frequent and accurate assessments of what the children know and is

focused at different levels of difficulty to meet individual needs. Areas where children are struggling are quickly identified and addressed. For example, an added emphasis on teaching sounds and letters has led to some good improvements in early reading and writing skills. Activities take account of children's interests and include an excellent range of visits, visitors and joint projects with older pupils. For example, Reception children enjoyed a 'big draw morning' with Year 3 pupils. A good balance of short, adult-directed sessions and child-initiated activities encourages children to become confident, independent and keen learners. Children make excellent progress and their skills are well above the levels expected for their age when they leave the Reception class. Staff are very well led by the manager and work effectively as a team. The provision for pupils' welfare is outstanding and staff know pupils extremely well.

What the school should do to improve further

- In mathematics in Key Stage 2, improve the marking of pupils' work and clarify the targets that they are set.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is excellent because most children start Nursery with the skills that they are expected to have for their age and by the end of Year 4 they leave with standards that are very high. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make excellent progress and most have skills well above average when they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve exceptionally well and reach standards that are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, inspection and local authority evidence show that pupils continue to make excellent progress and standards are very much higher than those expected for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils achieve very well because of the caring and nurturing ethos within the school. Although standards are consistently very high and are continuing to improve, they are better in reading and writing than mathematics. The school is addressing this issue and pupils make good progress in mathematics; however, the marking of pupils' work and targets set in mathematics are less effective than in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are outstanding. They are well supported by links with local churches, an excellent programme for personal education and philosophy sessions for children. Across the school, pupils enjoy learning, have a strong work ethic and are very confident in their own abilities. Pupils' attendance is well above average. They say that any rare incident of bullying is dealt with swiftly and they feel totally safe. Pupils show great respect for people and resources and value the many rewards on offer for good conduct, effort or thoughtful actions. As a result, behaviour is exemplary and relationships are outstanding. Pupils' excellent awareness of global citizenship is enhanced through their contact with, and fundraising for, their partner school in Kenya.

The Healthy Schools and Activemark awards recognise pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. They enjoy the varied choice of school lunches and take good advantage of the wide range of sports and physical activities. Pupils play an important part in decision-making through their elected school council and are keen to take responsibility for jobs around school. For example, they organise recycling and composting activities and enjoy working on the school's allotment. These factors, together with high standards, prepare pupils extremely well for their future education and citizenship.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils' learning is outstanding because the teaching is excellent. Pupils have a thirst for learning and the school exploits this to the full. Pupils are confident, motivated, concentrate well, persevere and complete a lot of work in the time allocated to the tasks. In the lessons seen, consistently strong features were the outstanding relationships between adults and pupils, the teachers' very high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their work and behaviour and the way in which teachers introduce new material to the pupils so as to stimulate interest. Pupils are taught how to work as a team and the efficient teamwork seen amongst the adults provides an excellent role model. Planning is thorough and teachers are very clear about what the pupils are to learn in each lesson. Marking is very good in the books pupils use for 'big writing'. It is good in mathematics but less effective and, as a consequence, they make good rather than exceptional progress in this subject.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is lively, responds exceptionally well to all of the pupils' needs and is well integrated with the community. The experiences pupils receive are exceptional and the work the school does with Creative Partnerships is outstanding. Currently, the pupils, staff and parents are preparing for their annual fete which is a whole-village extravaganza. The teachers use the curriculum exceptionally well to develop links across subjects. They ensure that pupils' learning is very meaningful and this is rewarded with pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to their work. Through the curriculum, pupils become aware of different cultures and religions and they can talk knowledgeably about differences and similarities. Sufficient emphasis is given to the development of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils also benefit from a wealth of exciting and high-quality art, music, dance, drama and physical education activities, a knowledge of French and Spanish, a wide range of visits and visitors and a plethora of very well-attended clubs which occur before and after school and at lunchtimes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Parents praise the 'welcoming atmosphere' and the 'great ethos'. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Staff are diligent and pupils are extremely well supervised at break and lunchtime. Pupils

say there is always an adult on hand if they have any worries. Arrangements for first aid and handling medication are very well established and all staff are keenly aware of individual needs, such as medical problems or allergies. Safety inspections are carried out regularly and action taken to rectify the issues identified. Academic guidance is extremely well established and tracking records provide a clear picture of pupils' progress. Special teaching programmes are planned to provide a boost to learning, where needed. Advice and guidance for pupils in English are excellent and explain what they do well and where they need to improve. In mathematics the advice is good but less detailed and therefore less effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership and management have a very positive impact on pupils' academic and personal development. The excellent headteacher, along with the team of very effective senior managers and governors, has created a highly motivated staff who know and understand their responsibilities and are always striving to improve further. Through the rigorous appraisal of the school, the staff and governors have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are celebrated and weaknesses are rigorously worked upon until the desired improvement is achieved. Financial management is very good and the school has achieved the Financial Management Systems in Schools Award. The school provides outstanding value for money. The school's work to promote community cohesion is excellent. It is carefully planned and supports the school's ethos of inclusion. There is a shared commitment by governors and senior staff to set challenging targets, to provide the best for each pupil. Everyone responds very positively to achieve these. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the outstanding education and care that their children receive.

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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 boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B



11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Corbridge Church of England Aided First School,
Northumberland, NE45 5JQ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We found everyone very helpful and we very much appreciate the honest way in which you talked to us about your school. You all helped us to understand how your school works.

We are pleased to tell you that we agree with you that Corbridge Church of England First School is an outstanding school.

We were particularly impressed with the hard work you do in lessons and the excellent progress that you make with your work. We were delighted to see the exemplary care that all the staff provide for every child and how this helps you to make excellent progress in your personal development. You showed that you very much enjoy the excellent range of lessons, the before- and after-school and lunchtime clubs and the visits and visitors that are provided for you. Your parents wrote and told us that they found the school a very caring place and this was evident. They also said that the adults in the school give you an excellent education and encourage you to do your very best. We agree with your parents.

The staff and governors are working hard to make your school an even better place. We have asked your teachers to help you make even better progress in your mathematics by improving the marking of your work and setting you very clear targets, like they do in your writing books.

We know you are very proud of your school. We hope you enjoy your annual fete and we send our very best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Hudson and team
Lead inspector