

# Herdley Bank CofE First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	128090
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	341006
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	23
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Thomas Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Judith Dwyer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Coanwood Haltwhistle Northumberland NE49 0QT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed seven teachers and nine lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and analysed 12 questionnaires from parents and carers, four from pupils and seven from staff. The inspector also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, at the data the school had collected about the pupils' progress and at the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- current attainment and progress, particularly in writing
- how effectively teachers use assessment to help pupils to improve their work and involve them in assessing their own learning
- the effectiveness of monitoring, recording and evaluation of pupils' learning and progress by teachers.

## Information about the school

Herdley Bank CofE First school is much smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. All pupils are White British and all have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is lower than average. The school has many awards including the Healthy Schools award and the International award for the development of the pupils' awareness of other cultures. The school is part of a Federation with another local school, with the headteacher spending half of her time in each school. Separate childcare provision shares the school site, but this is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Herdley Bank provides an outstanding standard of education in a very caring, family-like environment. Parents and carers recognise this and talk about their children 'prospering well' and the 'brilliant work' of the school.

Pupils' academic achievement is outstanding, as are many aspects of their personal development. In particular, pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle and they have a very keen sense of feeling safe. The latter has been fostered very well through innovative activities, such as the production of road safety animated videos. It is also firmly underpinned by excellent care, guidance and support.

The headteacher leads and manages the school extremely well. Senior staff have a high level of competency and there is a keen sense of cohesiveness amongst the adults in school. This ensures that the school runs most effectively, even on the days when the headteacher is not working there. All the staff liaise together seamlessly to ensure that maximum use is made of expertise, resources and space. Each adult knows the needs of each pupil very well, through very impressive monitoring and evaluation of their learning and progress. Any relative underachievement, for example as in writing, has been addressed, such that progress there is now excellent.

Pupils benefit greatly from the small nature of the school and individual attention. This is supplemented most effectively by the joining of other pupils from the nearby school one day a week. This allows the excellent curriculum to widen and for the pupils to benefit from specialist teaching in music, religious education and French. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The latter is developing well, but at present there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about ethnic cultures that reflect the diversity that exists in the United Kingdom today. There is a very strong spiritual emphasis in school and during the inspection pupils were seen enjoying performing the Celtic Blessing.

Since the previous inspection there has been substantial improvement in outcomes for the pupils, particularly in their achievement. This has been helped greatly by the creative nature of the curriculum and the excellent teaching. The school is not complacent, and thorough, accurate evaluation is helping to ensure that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures, including those

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represented in the United Kingdom as well as internationally, by:

- building links with schools in the United Kingdom that contrast with the school in terms of the socio-economic and ethnic mix of pupils
- consolidating links that have already been established with schools internationally.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Inspection evidence confirmed that pupils make excellent progress. This is true for pupils throughout the school, and also for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The standards they attain are above average. For example, one Year 2 pupil eloquently explained that resolution meant 'getting an answer to a problem'. Pupils are fully involved in their own learning. They are strongly encouraged to play an active part in checking their own work. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 1/Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils had to gauge how well they had 'climbed the story mountain', against clearly defined criteria. Year 3 pupils were seen thoroughly enjoying a French lesson, role-playing different sports. Pupils' above average attendance and good behaviour impact well on their learning and only occasionally do they need to be reminded to keep on task. Pupils enjoy very much taking on responsibilities, such as helping younger children to read and helping to serve at lunchtime. They enjoy growing their own vegetables and using them to produce healthy options in their cookery lessons. Pupils are well thought of in the local community and raise money for a variety of charities. They interact very well with each other, because of the school's strong focus on respect and caring for others. When asked what could be better in school, one pupil said, 'Nothing, no nothing at all'.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>

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

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<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>1</b>
	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. Teachers are very confident and secure in their subject knowledge. They pay great attention to assessment data to match tasks to pupils' differing needs and abilities. Lessons are very well paced, challenging and sharply focused on learning. Most of the time there is independent, group and/or pair work supported by the class teacher and very able teaching assistants. Regular monitoring of progress during lessons ensures that any misunderstandings are quickly identified and put right. Marking informs pupils clearly of what they need to do to improve and pupils themselves often take a significant role in assessing how well they are doing.

The excellent quality curriculum is very effective in supporting pupils' personal development, as well as their academic achievement. For example, the wide range of enrichment activities in sports and the arts provide stimulation and enjoyment as well as laying firm foundations for the future. Trips to places like Ford Castle are very much looked forward to and help pupils to become confident young people. The taught curriculum meets pupils' needs particularly well and basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT) are firmly embedded throughout. The school's excellent provision for care, guidance and support ensures that each pupil is known and valued as an individual. Pupils say they are confident in approaching adults with any concerns and that any problems are dealt with well. The school has formed very effective links with the on-site pre-school provision so that transition into the Reception class is very smooth. Similarly, strong relations with the local middle schools prepare pupils very effectively for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>1</b>
	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher has a very clear vision and ambition for the schools under her care. She has expertly instilled a real sense of pride and drive amongst all the staff, such that all are fully committed to providing the highest standard of education. Management of teaching and learning are exemplary, so that extremely high standards of teaching and assessment exist. Pupils, young as they are, are fully involved in their own learning. They have challenging targets which they are able to describe well. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's vision and its practices. There is very little variation between the progress of individual pupils. The school promotes community cohesion well and has a clear action plan in place to develop further its links with schools internationally and set up links with schools in the UK of a different socio-economic and ethnic make up. Excellent safeguarding procedures, which are frequently updated, ensure that staff are fully aware of current issues and given regular high quality training. Governance is good. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school, and act as critical friends. They help to steer the direction of the school, but their work is not fully evaluative at present. The school provides excellent value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The outstanding provision in Reception ensures that children get off to an excellent start in school. Children enter school with skills and understanding that vary considerably, but on average are below those expected, particularly in linking letters to sounds and in writing. They make outstanding progress during the year and leave Reception with nationally expected levels overall. Staff, including teaching assistants, have high

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expectations and provide a very wide and comprehensive range of learning experiences in a very calm, but purposeful environment. As a result children gain positive learning attitudes and develop cooperative learning skills and confidence. Role play is particularly strong, composing invitations for 'a teddy bears' picnic' re-enforcing writing well. Learning experiences are skilfully focused to promote speaking, listening and independent thinking. Children are safe and feel secure, due to the exemplary care and welfare provided by the diligent and committed staff. Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Meticulous planning, based on a detailed knowledge of the children, ensures that the learning experiences are tailored very well to each child's needs. Less secure aspects of learning are continually addressed with well thought out strategies. There is evidence that these have a good impact, for example, in the improved performance in writing.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

Just over one half of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Most are very positive about all aspects of the school. All agreed that their child enjoys school very much, something that the inspector agreed with. A very small minority felt that the school did not help them to support their child's learning. The inspector judged that this was something that the school did particularly well.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Herdley Bank CofE 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 inspector received 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 23 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	58	5	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	75	2	17	1	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	50	5	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	58	4	33	0	0	1	8
The teaching is good at this school	7	58	4	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	67	3	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	58	4	33	0	0	0	0
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)	5	42	5	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	50	5	42	1	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	50	5	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	33	7	58	1	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	42	5	42	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	58	4	33	1	8	0	0

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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Herdley Bank CofE First School, Haltwhistle, NE49 0QT

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and I am very grateful for the excellent contribution you made to the inspection. Your school is an outstanding one that really looks after you and helps you to learn very well.

Here are some of the things that I particularly liked.

- You love coming to school and you are very keen to learn and to check your work.
- Most of you behave very well and you are all very polite.
- You look after each other very well.
- Your teachers make your lessons really interesting and they listen carefully to your ideas; they also plan an excellent curriculum which you really enjoy.
- The adults in school make sure that you are very safe and well cared for.

You said that you enjoy learning about people who have different cultures to your own. I have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to do this, particularly to help you learn about the cultures that are found in the different parts of the United Kingdom today. You can help by continuing to be curious, and interested in learning about other people who live in our country and abroad.

It was a delight to hear you enjoying singing the Celtic Prayer and also to have lunch with you. I was very impressed with your animated road safety videos and the excitement of having a DVD produced.

I would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alison Thomson

Lead inspector

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