

Stamfordham First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122202
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380423
Inspection dates	29 February 2012–1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Richards
Headteacher	Claire McKinney
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
School address	Stamfordham Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE18 0NA
Telephone number	01661 886358
Fax number	01661 886358
Email address	admin@stamfordham.northumberland.sch.uk

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Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Thomson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) available to aid inspection planning. The inspector observed four teachers teaching nine lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and the school staff. The inspector observed the school's work, including analyses of the pupils' work, and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to development planning, safeguarding and child protection, the monitoring of the quality of teaching, external views of the school and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspector also analysed 35 parental and carers' questionnaire, 37 pupils' questionnaires and 10 completed by the staff.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than average for a school of this type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. There is an average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, although the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The school has many awards, including Healthy School status for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the International award for the promotion of an understanding of other cultures. The number of pupils who do not have all of their education at this school is higher than normal due to their parents being in the Armed Services. Separate childcare provision shares the school site, but this is not managed by the governing body and was not included in this 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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- Stamfordham is an outstanding school in all respects, including the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The following comment illustrates the high esteem in which the school is held by of all parents and carers, 'A fabulous school with top notch teaching and superb pastoral care'.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They enter Reception Year with skills that are broadly as expected and leave at the end of Year 4 with attainment that is high, well above that expected. Throughout the school pupils make outstanding progress in all subject areas. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Those whose parents are in the Armed Services and who do not have all their education at this school make excellent progress as well. Equality of opportunity is outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are very enthusiastic and use interesting and innovative activities to make learning fun. They use skilful questioning to challenge pupils and make them think. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work most effectively and make it clear to them how they can improve it. They consistently provide pupils with well-judged criteria for success and involve them fully in using these to assess their own learning. This is a key factor in the success of the school and in pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Pupils behave extremely well and say that they feel very safe in school. They are very polite and welcoming and they look after each other well. They cooperate in a very mature way in lessons and this has a very positive effect on their learning. The pupils rate behaviour highly and they are very proactive in the promotion of their own safety and that of others.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are highly successful. The school knows its strengths and the areas to develop further extremely well, involving all staff in self-evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress are carried out very rigorously and, along with the

outstanding curriculum, ensure that the needs and interests of all pupils are met very effectively. The school provides many memorable experiences, and plans new ones enthusiastically for its pupils and this helps their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to be outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school has accurately identified its priorities for improvement and there are no additional ones to add.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start in the Reception class with skills that vary, however, the skills displayed are generally around those expected for their age in all areas. Excellent induction procedures with parents and carers and with the pre-school provision on site help the children to settle quickly and get a very confident start to their school life. Children socialise very well and are very eager to learn. They make excellent progress and typically enter Year 1 having exceeded the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is securely above average. This is helped greatly by the school's very effective literacy programme that fosters a real love of reading. Listening to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read confirmed that their attainment in reading is above average and sometimes high. Many were so eager they wanted to read the whole of their book to the inspector. Progress in all subject areas throughout the school, including reading, is excellent and pupils consistently leave school at the end of Year 4 with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that is high, very close to that expected of pupils at the end of Year 6.

Parents and carers strongly agree that their children are achieving very well. The school's data shows that progress has steadily improved since the previous inspection. This is helped greatly by innovative changes to the curriculum and very well-targeted use of teaching assistants. The inspection confirmed that learning was outstanding. Excellent progress was seen in a Reception class lesson where children applied their mathematical skills to compare the sizes of a visiting dinosaur's handprint to their own. The teacher involved them very effectively in their learning by asking them to explain how well they had done. Pupils rise to challenges well, such as problem solving in a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, or writing diary entries about The Great Fire of London in a Years 1 and 2 English lesson. Throughout the school, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. This is helped greatly by the excellent support from the teaching assistants. Pupils who enter partway through the year, such as many of those from families of the Armed Services, also make outstanding progress.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers feel that their children are very well taught. Outstanding teaching was observed in many lessons during the inspection. Teachers are very enthusiastic and make learning fun. The outstanding curriculum allows them to create a very purposeful learning environment where the pupils are fully involved in the process.

Pupils gain confidence because they are given many opportunities to voice their opinions, share ideas and help assess their own learning, all of which contribute effectively to their social and moral development. In many lessons, pupils were seen eagerly checking how well they were learning against clear criteria for success. The teachers and pupils together consistently use a system of 'tickled pink' highlighting for work they have learned well and going for growth, green highlighting, for work where they need to learn more. Teachers mark the pupils' work thoroughly. Along with correcting mistakes and giving praise, they write many comments to help pupils know how they can improve their work.

Teachers plan their lessons very effectively with work that is carefully matched to the abilities of all pupils. This was exemplified particularly well in a Years 3 and 4 English lesson, where different groups of pupils each had their own appropriate tasks to enable them to use their senses to describe a forest setting. Teachers use skilful questioning to extend pupils' thinking. This was seen to especially good effect in a Years 1 and 2 mathematics lesson, where pupils were asked to explain clearly how they had arrived at their answers. Curriculum planning allows for many opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). In a Year 3 and 4 lesson on the Egyptians, pupils eagerly researched and wrote about an archaeologist's artefacts. They were so excited about the prospect of doing this you could have heard a pin drop as the artefacts were revealed. This lesson exemplified the creative nature of the curriculum, weaving together history, writing and ICT, particularly well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding and there is much evidence that it has been so for some time. Pupils talk about their school being 'very friendly'. Year 4 'buddies' take their role of helping others very seriously and there is much kudos associated with the role. Incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare and any that occur are dealt with very well. There have been no exclusions in the recent history of the school. Attendance is consistently above average and sometimes high. This is despite the school's sensitive policy of authorising the children from families in the Armed Services some time with their parents. Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed strongly that behaviour is good. Similarly, the pupils' questionnaires showed they agreed that behaviour is good in lessons most of the time. Pupils' behaviour impacts extremely well on their learning. This was seen many times throughout the inspection. They rise well to the challenge of assessing their own work and that of others.

Throughout the inspection, there were many examples of the pupils being very considerate towards others. Older pupils look after the younger ones very well during break and at lunch times. Most pupils agreed that they feel safe in school all the time. They told the inspector that school is very safe because the teachers look after them well and there are locks on the doors. They have an extremely good understanding of how to take care of themselves and one another. Examples of this include the production of a booklet entitled, 'Kill Speed' in an effort to reduce the speed of the cars on the road that runs past the school and also their risk assessment cards for the field equipment.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are exemplary; particularly that of teaching and learning, and all staff are ambitious on behalf of their pupils. The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. Aspects for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been tackled thoroughly. The headteacher delegates well and all teachers play a vital role in monitoring and evaluation, not only that of their own areas of responsibility, but of the whole school. The school monitors and evaluates the progress of the pupils rigorously and any underachievement is addressed quickly and effectively. Consequently, attainment and progress have improved strongly. Equality of opportunity is outstanding, with all groups of pupils making outstanding progress. Each pupil is known extremely well and those who enter partway through their education are nurtured and made to feel most welcome. The staff questionnaires show that all staff feel extremely valued. Governance is outstanding. Members of the governing body have been very effective in helping to move the school forward and are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating its work.

The staff make learning highly enjoyable and provide pupils with an outstanding curriculum that impacts particularly well on their academic achievement as well as their personal development. Who would not be thrilled at linking up live with a safari park in Africa to watch animals drinking at a waterhole as part of a lesson on African animals? There is a wide range of activities, including music, art, French, fencing and gardening. The school wins many trophies in a variety of sporting events, despite its small size. The promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Time is built in for reflection in many lesson activities as well as in assemblies and there are very strong links with local churches. Pupils enjoy reciprocal visits with a city school where many of the pupils come from ethnic backgrounds different from those of the pupils at the school. They also exchange letters with a school in Uganda and have been involved in fundraising for a new generator for it.

Safety is a very high priority and this approach results in children feeling extremely safe and secure. Safeguarding is robust with clear policies and very thorough risk assessments. Parents and carers agree strongly that the school keeps them very well informed, acts promptly on any concerns and helps them to be fully involved in their children's learning. Many comment very favourably about the conscientiousness and approachability of the headteacher and the staff. Based on the improvements that have already been made since the previous inspection, the school's capacity to improve further is outstanding.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stamfordham First School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne – NE18 ONA

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you and seeing you learn in class. Your comments in your questionnaires and in discussions with me helped me to understand how much you enjoy coming to school and your pride and interest in the many things you learn. I worked closely with your headteacher and also spent time talking to your teachers and governors and looking at your work. Your school is an outstanding one where you learn particularly well.

Here are some of the things that I particularly liked.

- You love coming to school and you are very keen to learn.
- Your behaviour is excellent; you get on well together and look after each other.
- You know how to keep yourselves and others safe.
- You enjoy taking part in all the school activities, such as gardening, choir and many sports.
- Your teachers teach you very well and get you to think about how well you are learning.
- The adults in school make sure that you are very well looked after.

Even although your school is an outstanding one, your headteacher wishes to make it even better and more exciting than it is now. I know that you will help her by keeping enthusiastic about your learning.

I would like to wish you all the best for the future. I hope that you continue to enjoy being at your school and eating all those interesting vegetables that you grow in the school garden.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson
Lead Inspector

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