

# Wylam First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122237
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	314244
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Dower

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	0
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ken John
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynn Johnston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bell Road Wylam Northumberland NE41 8EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01661 852771
<b>Fax number</b>	01661 854225

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small school serving a rural area. Pupils are from mixed social and economic backgrounds and are mainly of White British heritage. A few of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low and that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes a Nursery and the Reception class. The school has the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, Investors in People and in June this year was the only school in the North East to gain the Sing Up Platinum 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. Learning activities are challenging. Classroom scenarios are created where pupils have to understand and solve problems using a range of learning skills. Year 2 pupils used analytical, role play and presentation skills to understand how the Great Fire of London affected ordinary citizens and what they had to do to rebuild their lives after the catastrophe. Pupils are placed in real life situations outdoors where demands are made on their investigative, organisational and communication skills. Year 3 pupils designed an outdoor building for the school and won their case for its construction before a planning inspector. The progress of their endeavours was caught on film, made and edited by Year 4. It is through giving pupils the means to learn that the school has laid such excellent foundations for their future success.

Parents recognise this and are fulsome in their praise of all that the school does. A daughter 'is having a fantastic experience while at school and enjoying her learning. Her confidence is buoyed by the experiences she has'. Parents regard it as the centre point in their community, contributing significantly to the richness and cohesion of village life. There are excellent links with local people who talk to pupils on a regular basis about sport, the diversity of cultures and faiths, science, environmental and other issues. Pupils take their music into the community and show their concern for others through charitable activities. They make excellent use of the local environment to understand the place of humans in the natural order. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 are impressive and have been significantly above average over the last five years. Standards as pupils leave at the end of Year 4 are similarly high. Pupils' progress over time and their achievement in relation to their starting points are excellent. Teaching is outstanding because it is consistently good and often exemplary and this is giving pupils the confidence to learn. The excellent curriculum is focused on the youngest pupils' personal, social and emotional development and then raising the bar with stimulating and challenging learning activities. The leadership of the headteacher and her key stage coordinators is outstanding and teachers and support staff are able and committed. They work effectively as team and morale is high. An experienced and shrewd chair of governors asks the right questions as well as offering support and encouragement. He is ably supported by a team of governors who are growing in confidence and understanding.

This is an inclusive school where pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are vulnerable in any way and those who find school routines difficult to adjust to, receive the care and support they need and make excellent progress academically and in their personal development. Standards have risen over the last three years. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, although achieving good standards of presentation in every pupil's book remains elusive. The school is in an excellent position to maintain and build on what has already been achieved.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is typical for children of that age, although there are some whose social and emotional development is not as advanced as expected. By the start of Year 1, children have met their learning targets, with many having exceeded them, and attainment

overall is much higher than average. Children's progress and achievement are excellent. This is down to very good and sometimes outstanding teaching and to the exemplary care given to each child. Children feel happy and secure in school because they receive the reassurance and emotional support they need. They can then look beyond their own needs and become sensitive to the feelings and needs of others. Such self-confidence enables them to take risks in their learning and learn from mistakes. Some Reception children were building a lighthouse and testing out materials that could be used to create a seaside tableau. Others were discussing plans for filming the work. They talked about their ideas and tried them out, happily changing course when things did not turn out quite as expected. The curriculum is broad and well structured and excellent use is made of the outdoor areas. A high priority is given to children's personal, social and emotional development to give them the self-assurance to learn through exploring and doing things for themselves. The excellent leadership of the EYFS results in children who 'sing together all the time, laugh a lot and support each other with care and understanding'.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- There are no significant areas for improvement beyond those already recorded in the schools' development plan.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is excellent. This is not always apparent in the results of national tests because of the very small size of the year groups. However, there has been a consistency in attainment over time with the results of national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 being significantly above average over the last five years in reading, writing and mathematics. The provisional results for 2008 show standards are not as high because the skills of this group are less strong than in previous years. Nevertheless, the school's records show that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made excellent progress.

The school's assessments and the optional tests show that standards in 2008 in Year 4 were much higher than is expected for pupils of this age. These high standards have been achieved over the previous three years. Pupils' progress over time and their levels of achievement compared to their starting points are excellent. This is so for all groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with a statement of special educational need.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is because the school goes to great lengths to meet the personal, social and emotional needs of the younger children and to give all pupils the learning skills which will serve them well in the future. Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricular activities and visits away. Attendance is above average. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and that they feel safe and secure. The behaviour seen in lessons and around the school was exemplary. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and well and they eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. They have a keen sense of fair play and know right and from wrong. The school council provides pupils with an insight into their responsibilities as members of a community and into how to get things done. Pupils' involvement in local community activities is excellent. Pupils are sensitive and caring to the sufferings of others and reflect on how they

must be feeling. All who work in the school have given pupils the emotional support to understand and cope with the unexpected.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and like their teachers and the classroom assistants. The school's approach is to give pupils the skills to learn and in this they succeed. Pupils are sometimes put into unfamiliar situations to gain in confidence from the experience. Year 3 pupils' interview with the Duchess of Northumberland gave them ideas for design work and an understanding of how to approach and communicate with people from different backgrounds. Pupils know that learning can be a haphazard process and that you learn from mistakes. Year 4 pupils were compiling a Victorian journal and learning about the use of the past tense and the first person singular. There were those who kept getting it wrong, but perseverance prevailed and well constructed and fluent prose was eventually read aloud to the class. The standard of presentation in the older pupils' books is at times variable and there are those who need help in completing and setting it out in an orderly and logical way. Very good use is made of computer and digital technology as a teaching and learning aid. Pupils particularly enjoy filming their work and then viewing and talking about what they have done. Such excellent provision means their analytical skills are well developed.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. There is a good balance between provision for developing pupils' basic skills and opportunities for them to broaden their understanding of the world around them. This has led to improvements in their confidence, their social and emotional development, their learning skills and their ability to work creatively and independently. A range of partners from architects to storytellers have enriched the curriculum and enabled pupils to link their learning with the outside world. There is music and dance for spiritual, emotional and cultural development. Good use of time through blocking for cross-curricular work enables pupils to follow their individual interests. Excellent use is made of the outdoor environment and of the local community as a learning resource. For example, the youngest children visit the plant nursery and Year 3 pupils learn about local history through visiting George Stephenson's cottage. There are other visits to local museums, art galleries and outdoor sites. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding with gardening, football, netball, film club, cooking, dance, the Christian club and karate.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

This aspect of the school's work is exemplary. Every pupil is known well by every adult in the school. The working atmosphere is one of a harmonious and lively community. Parents and carers are appreciative of the excellent care and support their children receive. There are vulnerable pupils who do not stand out because they are happy and involved in the school's day-to-day activities. There are excellent links with outside agencies to support the school in achieving such integration. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective additional support from the teaching assistants, as do those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Safeguarding procedures comply with government requirements and health and safety audits are conducted on a regular basis. Risk assessments are carried out when needed and particularly for visits out of school. The school has an excellent tracking system in place to monitor pupils' progress over time and to identify and respond to areas for improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. Senior staff and governors have an accurate understanding of pupils' learning, social and emotional needs and how to meet them. The focus of their work is on developing pupils' confidence and giving them the skills to learn and the ability to use them flexibly in different and at times unfamiliar contexts. Pupils have risen to the challenge and gained in confidence and maturity from learning through doing. All who work in the school understand and are committed to this approach in their teaching and support roles. This unity of purpose has created a lively and harmonious school where nothing is taken for granted and where improvements are constantly sought. The school is in an excellent position to improve further because of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and her key stage coordinators and the high expectations of supportive governors who are committed to the school's success.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## 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 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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wylam First School, Northumberland, NE41 8EH

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I found many interesting things to see. You all work so hard and you enjoy your lessons and like your teachers and the helpers. Many of you spoke to me about what you like best. You were very helpful and told me a lot about your lessons and the trips away.

I visit many schools in the north of England and yours is one of the best. This is because the adults do all they can to help you to learn and they give you tasks to do where you have to think hard and find out things for yourselves. This means that your work is of a high standard and that you are well prepared for your move to the next school.

I learnt a great deal in my time with you. Thank you to Year 2 for telling me about the Great Fire of London and to Year 3 for showing me how to prepare a pizza. I was impressed with the journals Year 4 pupils were writing and how well Year 1 pupils could count. Please tell the children in Nursery and Reception that they were doing lots of exciting things in the classroom and outside and were working and playing well together.

Please thank your parents for sending in their views. They helped me to understand why your school is so good.

Thank you again for being so friendly to me.

My best wishes to you all.

Brian Dower

Lead inspector