



Byker Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108458
Local Authority Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 288104
Inspection dates 19–20 October 2006
Reporting inspector David Earley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Commercial Road
School category	Community		Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, NE6 2AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2656906
Number on roll (school)	244	Fax number	0191 2656909
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Mary Briggs
		Headteacher	Mrs Linda Bradley
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 19–20 October 2006	Inspection number 288104
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school in a very deprived area. Eligibility for free school meals is very high and there is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are asylum seekers, is above average and rising. There is a higher than usual proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Attendance is broadly average and attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is well below that expected for children's ages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, with good features, which gives satisfactory value for money. A legacy of significant underachievement is being successfully addressed and pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress. This is because the school has undertaken a thorough and realistic self-appraisal where it identified its strengths and weaknesses and implemented decisive action for raising standards. Underpinning the school's drive to raise standards is the very clear and purposeful leadership of the headteacher, well supported by staff and governors.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards well below those expected for their ages. Provision is good and they make good progress, although most children do not achieve the expected standards by the time they join Key Stage 1. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress throughout the school, although standards reached in the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were well below average. The strategies put in place to raise standards are effective and the results in the national tests in 2006 in both key stages were higher. The current rate of progress for most pupils is quickening, and the majority of pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. The progress of the small percentage of higher ability pupils is less rapid when these pupils spend time unnecessarily practising a skill when they are ready to move on to the next step in their learning.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons that have plenty of pace and challenge, but there are some inconsistencies where these factors are missing, leading to slower progress. Care, guidance and support are good. This is a very caring school where pupils and adults work well together to overcome barriers to learning. The school ensures that pupils are safe and feel secure, and the school is a stimulating place in which to learn. One pupil commented, 'Teachers are very kind to you and you get a lot of learning in this school'. There are thorough assessment systems, which are used well by teachers to track progress.

Personal development is good, as is spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They know how to lead healthy life styles and have lots of opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the community. Basic skills are rapidly improving and, together with links with businesses and enterprise schemes, pupils are well prepared for future economic well-being. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and there are many opportunities to enrich learning.

Leadership and management are good. There is a shared commitment to raising standards. The budget is well managed to support improvements and issues from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure consistent challenge for higher ability pupils.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with standards well below those typical for their age. They make good progress but most of them do not reach the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. The rate of progress is quickening because previous disruptions to teaching have been resolved.

The results of the 2005 tests at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2006, school results indicate that standards are rising. This improvement is continuing in the current Year 2 where the pupils are making good progress and achieving well.

The results of the 2005 tests for pupils in Year 6 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in national tests have improved since the time of the last inspection and in 2004 the school was placed in the list of 200 most improved schools nationally. However, during this time pupils still consistently underachieved. Results dipped in 2005 because of high levels of pupil mobility and disruptions to teaching. In 2006, the results were better and the improvements are continuing in the current Year 6 where most pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily.

School assessments and inspection evidence indicate that the rate of progress throughout the school has accelerated and is now at least satisfactory as a result of the effective strategies put in place to raise standards. The small percentage of higher ability pupils at both key stages makes satisfactory progress. Although their achievement is improving and progress is better, this has not yet had an impact on standards in national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and the children from asylum seeker families make at least satisfactory progress and often good because they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school gives a high priority to this aspect of its work and this is well reflected in the very positive comments by pupils and parents. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school because their teachers are always at hand and they show good awareness of 'stranger danger'. Pupils enjoy the haven of tranquillity provided by the well-resourced and refurbished environment. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and are successfully encouraged to keep fit and eat healthy foods. Assemblies are used well to instil honesty, integrity and a strong sense of the importance of always doing your best. As a result, behaviour is good, and older pupils take their responsibilities as school counsellors seriously, knowing they 'make a difference'. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The strong ethos of equality ensures that all pupils are treated with respect. Links with local businesses and enterprise schemes prepare pupils well for their future economic well-being. Attendance is broadly average and the school takes positive action to encourage

regular attendance, for example, by rewarding high attending classes in the weekly achievement assemblies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Typically, lessons have a sense of pace and purpose, but this is not consistent across all classes. Where these strengths are missing, progress slows. A common school characteristic is the positive relationship between adults and pupils that provides a good basis for learning. Pupils are kept in close touch with what they are expected to learn through the sharing of objectives and recognising how to be successful in their tasks. Adults have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively with learners. Work is well marked, acknowledging endeavour and success. Helpful points are made to aid future progress. Learning support assistants are generally well deployed, for example, when supporting pupils who find learning difficult. Tasks are mostly well matched to pupils' prior attainment. However, when teachers require pupils to spend time practising a skill rather than challenging them to reach the next skill level, this slows the rate of progress. This is particularly the case for the few higher attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets requirements and is efficiently planned in response to national and local initiatives. It provides effectively for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, although its impact on standards has not yet matched school aspirations. The curriculum is generally well planned to meet the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Those who find learning difficult and those learning English as a new language make good progress as a result. Good provision is made for pupils' personal and social development. This ensures a secure environment for learning, characterised by pupils' good behaviour and sensible attitudes. The curriculum is well enriched. While most activities out of school time are for older pupils, there are some opportunities for younger ones. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits to places of interest and from stimulating and inspiring visitors into school. There are good links with outside agencies, particularly with the local secondary school, which enhances sporting provision and ensures that there are good arrangements for transfer to the next stage of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. Arrangements for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements. The school is very successful in providing a safe and healthy place in which to learn. Many pupils

enter the school from a challenging background. Some have experienced significant trauma. Arrangements for their personal and social development are very strong and they are provided with all the support they need to develop good attitudes to learning. This is the case for all pupils but particularly so for pupils who find learning difficult, those who have particular early barriers to learning and those recently arrived from overseas. Very good links with other educational establishments, outside bodies and parents provide a good basis for providing pupils with effective support and guidance. The school is developing its procedures for tracking progress. Comprehensive data are held to highlight where progress is being made and where progress is not brisk enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The very strong leadership of the headteacher, well supported by staff and the senior management team, has enabled the school to take clear and decisive action to reverse a legacy of underachievement. The headteacher shares her vision for improvement with staff and governors and has initiated a relentless drive to raise standards, based on a thorough and realistic appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has led to clear priorities in the school improvement plan, which is helping to raise standards. This is a very inclusive school where all pupils and adults get on well with each other. It provides a much appreciated learning community. However, the school knows that it needs to do more to address the achievement of higher ability pupils. Parents are made to feel welcome and are helped to further their own education as well as supporting their children. The school's budget is managed astutely so that the school has the resources and staffing needed to bring about improvements and raise standards. Staff work well as a team and the school has ensured that staffing is stable after a period of disruption. Issues from the previous inspection have been thoroughly addressed. Governance is satisfactory and improving. The chair of governors knows the school very well. Governors are supportive and hold the school to account for its performance.

Effective and accurate self-evaluation and the shared determination and enthusiasm of the staff and governors to raise standards give the school good capacity to improve.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Byker Primary School

Commercial Road

Byker

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE6 2AT

21 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we came to visit your school. Everyone was so polite and helpful and we really enjoyed talking to you. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school and that you feel safe and well looked after. It was good to see that lots of you do different jobs around the school, help each other and that you all get on well together.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- your work in English, mathematics and science is improving
- children who find learning difficult, those whose first language is not English and those who have recently come to this country do well because they receive good help to improve
- your school is a very caring place and you are all well looked after
- teachers work hard to help you to improve
- lessons are usually interesting and your learning is helped when you go on visits out of school and have people come into school to talk and work with you.

For your school to become even better we have asked your teachers to make sure that you all learn as well as you can to improve your standards in English, mathematics and science.

Thank you once again for your warm and cheerful welcome.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead Inspector