

Laurel Avenue Community Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114140 |
| Local Authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 357486 |
| Inspection dates | 5–6 April 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Linda Buller |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 106 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Ann Elliott |
| Headteacher | Mrs Valerie Vayro |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 February 2011 |
| School address | Laurel Avenue The Woodlands Durham DH1 2EY |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in nine lessons, taught by four teachers and had discussions with members of the governing body, staff, pupils, partners of the school and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans and school policies. Inspectors analysed 22 questionnaires from parents and carers. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Pupils' achievement in writing to determine the success of leaders and managers in driving improvement.
- The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 to determine the quality of teaching and curriculum provision in all key stages.
- The achievement of groups whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, to determine the quality of care, guidance and support.
- The impact of pupils' low attendance on their achievement and the development of skills for their future economic well-being.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average size school. Most pupils in school are from White British backgrounds. An above average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a high percentage of pupils having a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupil mobility is high with significant numbers of pupils leaving and arriving during each school year. The school has achieved the Enhanced Healthy Schools status, Artsmark, Activemark, the Anti-bullying Accreditation Kitemark and the Investors in Children standard. A private day nursery, which is subject to a separate inspection, shares the school site.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils thrive and achieve well in an inclusive environment where all are welcomed and valued. Pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school's work. Strong multi-agency partnerships support vulnerable pupils and their families. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where provision is good. This is built on well in Key Stage 1 where strong teaching leads to good progress and rising attainment. Rigorous systems of self-evaluation have helped leaders and managers to recognise that improving pupils' writing skills is a key priority if levels of attainment in English by the end of Year 6 are to rise. They regularly monitor lessons and teachers' planning to ensure that good opportunities are taken to help pupils to develop writing skills in a range of subjects and styles. Pupils' knowledge of the technical aspects of writing, such as how to use punctuation or interesting vocabulary to interest the reader, develops well due to good teaching. These strengths reflect the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. As a result, pupils display caring attitudes towards each other whatever their background or ability. Pupils' knowledge of communities beyond their local area is less well-developed. Pupils behave well; they are friendly and polite with most displaying good attitudes to their learning. Despite good teaching and an interesting curriculum, some pupils in Key Stage 2, continue to find it difficult to use their imagination to begin writing without extensive support from staff. As a result, although attainment overall by the end of Year 6 is average, attainment in writing remains weaker than that in reading and mathematics. A further hindrance to improving pupils' achievement is the poor attendance of some groups of pupils. A range of good initiatives to engage parents and carers and to reward pupils has seen attendance improve and persistent absenteeism reduce considerably. Nevertheless, there are still some pupils, including those who are the most vulnerable, for whom poor attendance is a significant barrier to raising their levels of attainment.

Leaders and managers at all levels are fully involved in ensuring that pupils' progress is tracked accurately and provision is monitored thoroughly. This has led to the accurate identification of gaps in attainment in different subjects and recognition of where further improvements can be made. Challenging targets are set for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and in the main these are achieved. However, leaders' and managers' expectation of the progress which pupils can make in lower Key Stage 2, are not always high enough. This is one reason why, although they make good progress overall, pupils' attainment is not yet above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupil attainment particularly in writing in Key Stage 2 by:

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- building on the good practice evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage of involving pupils in curriculum planning so that learning is firmly based upon pupils' own experiences and interests
- teachers consistently recognising when pupils are ready to be provided with the next challenging task
- marking pupils' work consistently to advise pupils how they can improve and give pupils the time to bring about these improvements
- increasing leaders' and managers' expectation of the progress pupils will make in lower Key Stage 2.
- Improve pupils' preparation for future economic well-being by:
 - continuing to raise levels of attendance
 - ensuring pupils make equally good progress in all basic skills.
- Improve the effectiveness by which the school promotes community cohesion by:
 - providing pupils with first-hand opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of communities beyond the school's immediate locality
 - helping pupils to understand how the culture and beliefs of different people impact on how they live and behave.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' achievement is good. They generally respond positively to the challenges set by their teachers and show good levels of enjoyment in their learning. In lessons, they are keen to answer questions and to share their ideas with others. Over the years since the previous inspection, attainment has ranged from significantly below average to average, due to very small cohorts. Results in Year 6 are often affected by a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than usual, including many who join the school during Key Stage 2. At whichever point these pupils join the school, their needs are quickly identified and they are skilfully supported in individual and small group sessions. As a result, in the main they make the same good progress as their peers.

From below-average attainment on entry to Year 1 pupils are increasingly progressing well, particularly in mathematics. They develop a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. Through good questioning and explanations by teachers, most pupils have a good understanding of how to use prior knowledge when solving new problems. This was seen, for example, in Year 6, where using the face of a clock helped pupils to link the angle associated with a quarter-turn to that of a quarter past the hour. Pupils went on to use their knowledge of halving and doubling to recognise the relationships between a right angle and a straight line. As a result, progress for all pupils was accelerated. This is less effective in writing. Although pupils generally enjoy the focus for literacy planned by staff, for example, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', they struggle to associate this with their own experience or interest. This slows pupils' progress in their ability to write independently.

Through discussion, pupils contribute well to each other's learning. They welcome the increasing opportunities to take greater responsibility, for example, in the school council. Pupils feel safe and secure. They are in no doubt that help will be quickly provided should

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any problems occur. Visits from the local emergency services, guidance on road safety and participation in safety workshops support their good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They have a good attitude to keeping themselves fit and healthy by participating in the wide range of sporting activities and the majority of pupils enjoy the healthy lunchtime meals. Pupils' basic skills are broadly satisfactory but are still weaker in writing; in addition, some pupils still do not attend regularly enough. Therefore, pupils' skills to prepare them for their future lives are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are strengths in pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and their ability to consider how the beliefs of different people impact on how they live and behave is less well-developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Challenging questioning and clear explanations are key elements of the good teaching and learning seen across the school. Excellent relationships support all pupils in the school, especially those with challenging behavior or other specific needs. This allows all pupils to learn well and without disruption. Teachers use information about pupils' prior learning effectively, preparing suitably varied tasks for different groups. Lessons move at good pace. Occasionally in lessons, teachers do not recognise quickly enough when pupils are secure in their knowledge and understanding and ready to move on to a more challenging task. This is a key reason why teaching remains good and is not yet outstanding.

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Classrooms are well-organised and extensive displays make them bright and informative. Pupils confirm that the information displayed helps them to improve their work. Marking of pupils' work is regular and detailed in the identification of how well pupils have or have not met the learning intention for the lesson. Marking is less effective in providing guidance for improvement or in ensuring that pupils correct mistakes.

Curriculum provision is well-organised and broadened effectively through strong links with other providers and by enrichment activities. The curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills and is leading to raised levels of attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1. Topics help pupils to see links between subjects. The bright displays around the school illustrate the good opportunities for pupils to put their literacy and numeracy knowledge into practice in a variety of ways. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 have not had the same length of time to benefit from these improvements to curriculum provision and still struggle at times to put their knowledge into practice.

The school's targeted support for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs has resulted in significant improvements in their behaviour; this contributes well to learning in lessons. Arrangements for pupils joining the school, whether in Nursery or later years, are extensive and well-thought-out. Pupils who miss work due to poor attendance are provided with sensitive support on their return to school in order to help them catch up with their peers, but this is not always enough to secure their good achievement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and the governing body work closely together with a shared vision for the school. Marked improvements, particularly in the levels of attainment reached by the end of Key Stage 1, show that leaders drive improvement and embed ambition well. All pupils, regardless of ability or background, are treated equally. Pupils are keen to say that there is no discrimination and that the school treats them fairly. The effective governing body plays a full part in monitoring the work of the school and is actively involved in setting key priorities for improvement. Close attention to challenging the school regarding the actions taken to improve attendance has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. The governing body recognises that the same degree of rigour and challenge is needed with regard to pupils' attainment if the school is to improve from good to outstanding.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough, effective and closely-monitored to ensure they continue to reflect all current requirements. Through the school's good knowledge of the community which it serves, community cohesion is developed well within the school and

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local community. Good links are established with local community groups to tackle a range of local issues. National and global aspects are covered appropriately through the curriculum, for example, in religious education lessons and the teaching of French, but pupils' depth of understanding through first-hand experiences is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding a ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with a range of skills and capabilities but, generally, they are well below the expected levels for their age. Many have poor language and social skills. Children settle well due to well-organised routines. They quickly thrive and grow in confidence in response to the very positive relationships established by staff and an environment where they feel safe and secure. A good range of activities, which provide interesting play opportunities, is well-balanced by more formal learning. Staff involve children well in the planning of their own learning and are careful to ensure that activities build on children's own knowledge and interests. This is supported by detailed records of observations, which, in turn, help staff to effectively engage children in their next steps in learning and to make good progress. The outdoor area provides children with a wide range of activities in which to extend all six areas of their learning. A strength of the outdoor provision is the opportunities it provides for children's social development and how to take calculated risks when running, climbing or using large wheeled toys. Leadership and management are good with close attention paid to meeting children's welfare requirements fully. Leaders and managers have a good knowledge of the progress being made by each child. However, the use of data analysis, to further drive improvement in the quality of provision overall, is less well-developed.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Less than a quarter of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. This is a low response compared to that of other schools. Those who did so were mainly positive in their responses. Almost all parents and carers agreed that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe from harm. Inspection evidence supports these positive views. A very small number of parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is consistent in the operation of the school behaviour policy and that, as a result, pupil behaviour is generally good and supports learning well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Laurel Avenue Community Primary 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 inspection team received 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 15 | 58 | 9 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 20 | 77 | 4 | 15 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 18 | 69 | 7 | 27 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 16 | 62 | 9 | 35 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 18 | 69 | 8 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 16 | 62 | 9 | 35 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 17 | 65 | 8 | 31 | 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) | 11 | 42 | 14 | 54 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 18 | 69 | 7 | 27 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 11 | 42 | 11 | 42 | 4 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 16 | 62 | 7 | 27 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 14 | 54 | 10 | 38 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 20 | 77 | 4 | 15 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 |

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 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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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.



11 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Laurel Avenue Community Primary School, Durham, DH1 2EY

Thank you for the part you played in helping inspectors to find out about your school during our recent visit. We enjoyed talking to you and I am delighted to tell you that we agree with you, your parents and carers that you go to a good school. It was pleasing to see how much your good behaviour contributes to how well you learn in lessons. It was good to hear that you feel safe in school and how keen you are to improve your health and fitness. We could see how well you all get on in school. This is because your school helps you to understand how to look after each other and the part you can play in making the local area a better place in which to live. We have asked your school to help you to learn more about people who live in other communities in this country and in other parts of the world.

You make good progress because your teachers explain things clearly and provide you with interesting activities. How well you use your knowledge to solve new problems in mathematics is impressive. Younger pupils in the school are now really enjoying their writing and making good progress. Some of the older pupils in school are still reluctant to write as much as they should. This is one of the reasons why by the time you reach Year 6 your attainment is average and not yet higher. Another reason is that, although attendance levels have improved, there are still some pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should. We have therefore asked your school to do a number of things to help to raise your attainment levels. We have asked that they involve you in the planning of your work so that those things which interest you most are used as a focus for your learning. We have also asked teachers to make it clear to you how you can improve when they mark your work. You can help with this by acting on their advice. Those of you with poor attendance can improve your chances of success in the future by starting to come to school more regularly.

I hope that you all continue to enjoy learning and do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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