

Bernard Gilpin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108830
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	356434
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Heron
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hall Lane Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH5 8DA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons and observed 11 teachers. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff and partners of the school. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, and a range of documentation was scrutinised including: the analysis of pupils' progress data, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school improvement planning, risk assessments and other documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 69 parents and carers were analysed and considered.

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

- Whether the proportion of good teaching is high enough to ensure that all groups of pupils do as well as they can, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The impact of pupils' personal development, particularly behaviour and attendance on their learning and progress.
- The ability of leaders and managers at all levels to bring about and sustain improvement in the outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

From October 2008 until January 2010 the school was subject to proposed reorganisation. During this time the number of pupils attending the school fell. In January 2010 these proposals were rejected by the Official Adjudicator. The school has undergone a number of staff changes since the previous inspection. Following the retirement of the headteacher in August 2010 the school was led by an acting headteacher until the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2011. A new deputy headteacher took up post in the week prior to the 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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' learning and progress, the quality of teaching and curriculum provision.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with a wide range of exciting activities that capture their imagination and lead to good progress. Leaders and managers have ensured that this good provision has been extended into Year 1. Elsewhere in the school, particularly in Key Stage 2 weaknesses in provision prevent many pupils from achieving as well as they should, so the promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate. Overall, pupils' achievement is inadequate because they do not make enough progress by the end of Year 6. The governing body is aware of the weaknesses in the school's provision but has not been rigorous enough in checking the impact of these weaknesses on outcomes for pupils or in holding the school to account.

The quality of teaching shows wide variation, and is inadequate overall, because pupils do not make consistent progress as they move through the school. Despite recent effective action by the headteacher to improve teaching, resulting in some good and outstanding practice, this has not yet had time to improve pupils' progress significantly. Improved systems to assess and track pupils' progress give staff a clear understanding of the different abilities of their pupils, but the use of this information to challenge or support pupils in their next steps in learning is not secure. The school is rightly planning a curriculum aimed at improving pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. High-quality learning experiences for pupils with specific needs are raising attainment for these pupils. However, work in pupils' books shows that: learning experiences are too narrow, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and practical activities and on too many occasions, pupils are set work in which they have already shown competence.

The school's caring ethos means that pupils feel valued as individuals and grow in confidence. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that this feeling of safety has increased due to improvements to safeguarding procedures, which are now good.

The drive and determination of the new headteacher, ably supported by the senior management team is creating the confidence to tackle problems head on. Key priorities for improvement have been identified accurately and there is a palpable sense of common purpose among staff. Senior staff, with local authority support, have introduced an effective programme of staff development. The success of these actions can be seen in

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the recent improvements in pupils' behaviour, attendance and the increasing rate of progress being made by pupils, particularly in Year 6. These clear signs of improvement and the positive learning environment indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - providing pupils with learning experiences which are closely-matched to their needs, so that all have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is of at least a consistently good standard by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to attain
 - providing pupils with enough time in lessons to put their new learning into practice
 - rigorously using assessment information to plan work which challenges or supports pupils in taking their next steps in learning.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to investigate through practical activities
 - ensuring curriculum planning builds systematically on pupils' knowledge and skills
 - ensuring curriculum planning reflects an appropriate balance between different aspects of each subject - for example by ensuring that in mathematics, pupils have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving
 - continuing to increase the number of opportunities for pupils to be involved in enrichment activities which add to their enjoyment of learning.
- Strengthening the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

From average starting points at the beginning of Year 1, pupils' progress has been variable since the last inspection. There is a small trend of improving attainment; however, it remains below average overall. This is because too few pupils reach the higher levels by the end of Year 6. This is particularly evident in mathematics. In the last two terms the rate of pupils' progress has increased in most classes as a result of targeted intervention and an improving trend in the quality of teaching. However, there are still too many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities for whom progress is not rapid enough. As a consequence, pupils' achievement, although improving, is inadequate.

Pupils enjoy their learning when they are stimulated and involved in interesting activities. For example, Year 5 pupils grew in confidence and were enthused to learn more, when high quality questioning was used to assess their knowledge and provide activities which allowed them to investigate and explore the scientific properties of a range of items. As a

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result, pupils made outstanding progress in their knowledge of scientific language and how to use this to record the results of their investigation. Pupils lose interest and motivation when tasks are not appropriate to extend their learning. Even at these times behaviour generally remains satisfactory.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to follow a healthy lifestyle and have responded with enthusiasm to the increased opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sport. Pupils make a positive contribution to their school and the local community through caring for the local environment, for example, bulb planting to improve the local area. Many pupils hold positions of responsibility; they respond with enthusiasm to the opportunities provided to work alongside business representatives improving their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and play a key role in coordinating the school's support for charities. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and in the main work together well in lessons. However, opportunities to engage widely with pupils of other ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds are not extensive and this limits pupils' cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	2
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?

Teaching is inadequate overall: it is not effective enough, especially for Key Stage 2 pupils in mathematics and writing, to enable pupils to catch up on gaps in their learning. In the best lessons, pupils are provided with work which challenges them to build on their prior learning. A good pace of learning is maintained by the use of effective questioning to

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check pupils' understanding and to promote independent thinking. This quality of provision is not yet a strong feature in all lessons. When teachers do not make adequate use of information about pupils' previous learning, the expectations of what pupils can achieve is too low. In some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to practice what they have learnt or to move on quickly enough to new learning.

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development but does not meet pupils' individual learning needs well enough. Too many activities are planned which occupy pupils without improving their learning or engaging their interest. There are insufficient opportunities to investigate through the provision of practical activities in some year groups. For example, in Years 3 and 4, the mathematics curriculum is heavily dominated by calculation and knowledge of number, with little evidence of skills progression or of pupils applying their knowledge to solve problems. Individual curriculum plans for some pupils, delivered through a range of intervention strategies, are contributing to a faster rate of progress but this is not always built on sufficiently well in all lessons.

Good-quality care contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their feelings of safety and security. Links with the local Nursery prepare children well for joining the school and this continues as they move to Year 1. Arrangements to promote good attendance have successfully reduced levels of persistent absence. The needs of pupils whose circumstances put them at risk of becoming vulnerable are satisfactorily met through partnerships with other agencies and one-to-one guidance. Provision to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have fallen behind in their learning is satisfactory. The provision in Years 5 and 6 is narrowing the gap caused by previous underachievement through effective support tailored to individual needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are ambitious for pupils and are fully committed to bringing about improvements. They are working effectively with the local authority to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise pupils' achievement. New systems to track pupils' progress, monitor teachers' performance and set targets for improvement are in place. This is a secure platform for improvement, but the impact of the initiatives is not yet fully evident in pupils' progress. The effectiveness of the governing body in addressing weakness within the school is inadequate. The governing body provides satisfactory support for the school's leadership but has not been proactive enough in challenging the

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school about its performance. Value for money is inadequate because outcomes for pupils are inadequate.

Through robust tracking systems the school is now aware of the variations in outcomes for different groups of pupils. Leaders are taking action to narrow the gap in performance between different groups, but this is not yet ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Safeguarding arrangements are good, for example, parents and carers and the local community have been fully consulted regarding improvements to the access to the school site. Staff and nominated governors are fully trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. The school promotes community cohesion in the school and in the local community effectively. Consequently, pupils of different gender, race and background are able to learn free from harassment or discrimination. The school recognises that the next step is to broaden pupils' national and international understanding of those who are from cultural backgrounds different to their own.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have ensured that provision, especially outdoors, has improved since the last inspection. This has further extended the range of exciting and well-planned activities which fully engage children in their learning. Children make consistently good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, many children exceed the expectation for their age. Children relish the opportunities to explore and to use their imagination as they instigate their own learning using a good range of high-quality resources. An environment which is rich in number and shape, and in opportunities to investigate, ensures that children develop excellent skills in ordering numbers together with a range of strategies for early calculation. Children take a lead from adults to access independently a life-size number line and large dice. They grin

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with delight as they recognise the number and jump along the line counting as they go until they reach 20. Other children use the wide range of books available to read stories to each other, demonstrating a sound knowledge of text carrying meaning and using the pictures to predict what they think will happen next.

Staff carefully observe and record which activities interest children the most. This is fully reflected in future planning so that every child is enabled to take the next steps in learning effectively. Staff have a good knowledge of the children in their key worker groups and build good relationships with their parents.

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

A below-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of parents and carers expressed satisfaction with the work of the school. A small number included additional written comments. These contained remarks regarding positive changes to the school since the appointment of the new headteacher, but also concerns regarding the fairness by which new behaviour strategies are operated. Inspection evidence confirmed pupils' views that the behaviour strategies recently introduced have significantly improved behaviour in lessons and around the school and that this has added to pupils' feelings of safety and enjoyment of school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bernard Gilpin 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	45	37	54	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	54	30	43	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	28	47	68	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	33	39	57	6	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	41	37	54	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	43	37	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	35	40	58	3	4	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)	14	20	40	58	7	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	25	45	65	7	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	25	39	57	6	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	26	41	59	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	28	41	36	52	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	35	42	61	1	1	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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bernard Gilpin Primary School, Houghton le Spring, DH5 8DA

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school, thank you for making us feel so welcome. We agree with those of you who say that things have got better since January and that behaviour has improved. This and improvements to the school building have helped you to feel safe. The increase in out-of-school activities is contributing well to your ability to lead healthy lifestyles. Most of you enjoy coming to school and your attendance is above average. You make a positive contribution to your school through the jobs which you do, such as members of the school council and you work hard to improve your local area.

Almost all of your parents are happy with the school. Nevertheless, there are a number of things to be done to make sure you make quicker progress and all do as well as you can. In order to make sure this happens, the school has been given a 'notice to improve'.

Those in charge of the school are making improvements that are helping you to make faster progress. We have asked them to make things even better by:

- making sure that the teaching in all of your lessons is good enough to help you to make good progress
- improving the activities in lessons so that you are able to be involved in practical investigations and build on what you already know
- making sure that the governing body of your school keeps a close check on what is being provided for you so that you all have an equal opportunity to succeed in all that you do.

All of you can play your part by continuing to attend regularly and trying hard with your work. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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