

Percy Main Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108572
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	363739
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Helen Gill
Headteacher	Mr John Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed nine class teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body and spoke to staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors also looked at: pupils' progress and achievement data; intervention and support programmes; documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils; school policies and plans for improving the quality of learning. They scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner to discuss his reports. They analysed 56 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of learning and the rate of progress made by pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances.
- The quality of teaching and its effectiveness in accelerating pupils' progress and raising achievement and attainment.
- The effectiveness of senior leadership in bringing about further improvements in Years 1 and 2, enriching the curriculum and sustaining the school's existing improvements.

Information about the school

Percy Main is a smaller than average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with very few at the early stages of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities with close to one-third of pupils identified. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is almost double the national average. Almost two-thirds of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is high in comparison with the national average. The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast club. The school has gained International School, the Next Generation Learning and the Eco-Schools Silver awards.

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. It is constantly improving and provides excellent care for all of its pupils. Pupils feel especially safe because, as one pupil remarked, 'The staff can protect you'. At the heart of the school's happy, friendly atmosphere are the high aspirations for the school of the headteacher. He is effectively supported by an increasingly confident and skilful middle leadership team. The staff enjoy a highly positive relationship with parents and carers, which includes the excellent support for families and their well-being by the learning mentor. One parent summed up the views of almost all the parents and carers by writing, 'The school is amazing, getting my child all the helps he needs, including myself'.

Most pupils enter Nursery with skills and experience well below those typical for their age, with particular weaknesses in speech, language and number. Typically, attainment at the end of Year 6 is average, but school information confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that the positive action to improve the quality of learning is resulting in rising attainment. For example, current Year 6 is on course to achieve above average attainment. Although this represents good progress overall, the pattern of progress is variable. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress, but the action taken to enliven learning, coupled with more settled staffing, is leading to better progress being made by current groups. Staff have worked diligently to enhance literacy skills, though weaknesses in writing remain across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers. In individual cases, highly effective intervention is resulting in excellent progress. Some of this intervention and support involves highly successful partnership working, such as with speech and sensory specialists. The rigorous checking of pupils' progress and the pinpointing of gaps in their learning, are having a positive impact accelerating rates of progress. Yet, assessment is not used consistently to boost progress by providing written feedback which spells out clear steps for improvement. Pupils are keen to learn, because the majority of teaching is good. However, on a few occasions teaching is less imaginative and inspiring than usually the case in this school. Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary in the classroom. They make an excellent contribution to decisions that improve the school and are extremely committed to contributing to life in their local community.

Senior leaders have an accurate grasp of the school strengths and areas for continued improvement through accurate self-evaluation and improvement planning is focussed well on improving the quality of learning. The excellent partnership working adds to the richness of the pupils' learning. The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge. The increasing quality of memorable learning experiences demonstrates the growing expertise of middle leaders. As a result of these factors, and the strong and effective focus on improving provision and outcomes for pupils, the school has a good and strengthening capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, especially in Years 1 and 2, by:
 - using and building on current inspiring practice within the school in order to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding
 - increasing the use of imaginative approaches to inspire and excite pupils, particularly in their writing throughout the school
 - ensuring that pupils' thinking is appropriately and regularly challenged to explain and justify their ideas, views and solutions
 - providing all pupils' with well-defined steps for further improvement through marking of work in order to boost their achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are keen to learn and react enthusiastically to their good teaching and effective classroom support and guidance. Consequently, attainment is rising steadily at the end of Year 6. Most pupils are exceeding what is expected of them, and more are reaching higher levels. When pupils are motivated to think for themselves, they apply their skills effectively to solve problems. When questioning does not constantly probe and challenge their thinking, progress can be uneven. In Years 1 and 2, school's assessment information shows that rates of progress are quickening. Initiatives to promote better reading and writing are successfully improving skills. Nevertheless, writing remains a relative weakness across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are potentially vulnerable and those who are new to learning English make good and sometimes better progress, because activities are carefully tailored to their needs and interests.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in their good relationships with each other and with adults. Most pupils attend regularly, with the number of pupils persistently absent having fallen to broadly average levels as a result of effective action taken by the school. Pupils display a good understanding of the benefits of keeping fit and eating healthily. They are eager to take on responsibility, such as when managing their own company, The Snack Shack, which makes 'smoothie' drinks to sell at break times. They take great pride in their role helping the school to improve and display great commitment to events designed to improve the quality of community life. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and report that, 'This is a very friendly school in which it is easy to make friends and be safe'. They are totally confident talking to staff to resolve any fears or concerns.

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

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

The quality of teaching is good with some inspiring teaching observed, especially in Years 5 and 6. Classrooms and adjacent outdoor areas are stimulating, friendly places for pupils and reflect the determination of the headteacher to make learning more consistently exciting. More inventive approaches are increasingly providing striking experiences which promote thinking and extend understanding. For example, the theatre visit to watch George's Marvellous Medicine, to stimulate reading and writing. In the best lessons, lively approaches ensure there is variety and pace in all activities. The demands made of pupils are thoughtfully matched to their abilities, needs and interests. For example, pupils were seen totally absorbed in imaginatively interpreting the lifestyle of a pirate in their writing. Open-ended questions demand an explanation of their thinking. In lessons when progress is slower, activities sometimes lack variety and challenge. Occasionally too much time is spent on the same task. Marking is positive and constructive with effective use of both targets and praise, but well-defined steps for improvement are not consistently provided to add to the challenges and promote even more improvement.

The good curriculum is becoming increasingly effective as opportunities are developed to link subjects together in more interesting ways. For example, visiting the nearby museum to learn about the World War Two initiative, 'Dig for Victory', before compiling their own garden diary. Planned opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their own skills, such

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as visiting the nearby City Learning Centre to use information and communication technology to design and construct a wanted poster for a criminal.

The excellent care, guidance and support are a clear strength of life in the school. This ensures that all pupils of all abilities, backgrounds and start points can achieve success. The school can point to some striking examples in helping pupils overcome difficulties and barriers to their learning. Excellent links with support agencies help to boost achievement and enhance pupils' well-being and development. Personalised approaches ensure appropriate support is provided for pupils and their families, some of whom are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances. Parents and carers appreciate the family atmosphere created by the school's 'open' practice. This leads to excellent collaborative working, enabling the school to provide pupils with the support that they need.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A distinct strength in the headteacher's leadership is his high expectations for both staff and pupils. An increasingly positive climate for learning permeates the whole school, because senior leaders have galvanised the commitment of all staff to improving the quality of learning. Inconsistencies in the pattern of progress and achievement are being systematically addressed. There is a strong focus on the precise checking of pupils' development to inform lesson planning. Concerted action to improve literacy skills is boosting achievement and attainment. The on-going improvements in provision, especially outdoors, reflect the school's determination to secure further improvement. Consequently, improvements are being sustained and attainment is rising year-on-year.

The governing body share the same aspirations and commitment to providing high-quality learning and care. They play a full part shaping the strategic direction of the school. The growing experience of middle leadership is adding to the sharpness of monitoring and evaluation. The excellent relationships with parents and carers ensure that they are involved in their children's learning and development. The very strong links with the local community add to the sense of belonging. The school adopts good procedures for safeguarding, which fully meet requirements and include particularly robust risk assessments. Community cohesion is promoted well with a developing range of first-hand experiences of the diversity that exists in the world around them. This includes having a meal in close-by Chinatown in Newcastle and also raising money for Farm Africa. The accelerating progress and rising attainment that is emerging for all pupils, illustrates the school's commitment to ensure that equality of opportunities is positively promoted, so that all can achieve their full potential.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle happily and confidently in their warm and welcoming environments, because of the excellent care and attention they receive. On arrival, skills and experience are well below those typical for their age with underdeveloped communication and number skills. They make good progress working towards the goals expected of them for their age, by the time they enter Year 1. Welfare requirements are fully met ensuring that all children are kept safe. Excellent links with parents and carers support their children's learning and development well, for example recalling a family visit to grandma's caravan and visiting a horse sanctuary. In activities, whether outdoors or indoors, children behave well and display a developing grasp of right and wrong. They are encouraged to think for themselves, for example, when learning about sea creatures in the Dove Marine laboratories at nearby Cullercoats. Nevertheless, opportunities to find things out for themselves and participate in purposeful learning and play are sometimes limited when outdoors.

Children regularly practise the use of letters and sounds to accelerate early reading and writing progress, although not all opportunities are taken to apply their skills intensively across all activities. Systematic observations and assessments are assembled in children's learning journeys, which provide a secure basis for the accurate judgements of children's progress and development. The planned improvements to provision, such as the relocation of the Reception classroom adjacent to the Nursery and the matching of the learning quality outdoors with the high quality of that indoors, reflects the ambition and increasing confidence of leadership and management.

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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

Under one third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire which expressed their views of the school. All parents and carers were happy with their children's experiences at the school. A very small number expressed concerns, but the inspection evidence supports the positive views of the vast majority of parents and carers who responded.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Percy Main 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 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 223 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	64	17	30	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	75	13	23	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	70	16	29	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	61	18	32	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	73	14	25	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	63	21	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	70	17	30	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)	35	63	17	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	66	18	32	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	61	20	36	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	61	21	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	70	17	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	71	16	29	0	0	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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Percy Main Primary School, North Shields NE29 6JA

I want to thank you all for the happy and friendly welcome that you gave the inspectors and me when we visited to see how well you were learning. We really enjoyed our time talking to you.

Percy Main is a good and constantly improving school, which has a number of strengths. We were impressed by the way your headteacher and staff constantly encourage and support you to do well. Consequently, your school enjoys excellent relationships with your parents and carers. Your school has made certain that staff work extremely closely with staff from other services to help improve your learning. We were pleased by your sensible behaviour and the excellent care taken of you. You obviously feel extremely safe and happy because of this. You understand well the benefits that a healthy lifestyle can bring. You take great pride helping the school to improve and enthusiastically join in all community activities. Some of you told us that your teachers make much of your learning fun. Your school is taking very positive action to improve and this can be especially seen in the faster progress of younger pupils and increasing skills of older pupils.

We have asked your senior leaders and staff to look at more ways of helping you to make faster progress. We think that your lessons could be made more interesting and thought provoking. More could be expected from you when explaining your ideas and answers. We have asked senior leaders to make sure that you are given clear advice as to how you can improve your work, especially your writing.

You can play your part by working as hard as you can and attending regularly. Thank you for helping with this inspection.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Clive Petts

Lead Inspector

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