

Bernard Gilpin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108830
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	385850
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Inkster HMI

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	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Heron
Headteacher	Andrew Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2011
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Inkster

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Seconded

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 11 staff, scrutinised pupils' work and heard a number of pupils read. Discussions were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, four members of the governing body, staff and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including minutes of governing body meetings, national and school assessment data, curriculum planning, documents in relation to safeguarding and the school's own self-evaluation. The inspectors took account of the views expressed in 86 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Bernard Gilpin is a broadly average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. The school has Healthy School status and an Eco-award. The school meets the current floor standards which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. At the last inspection, in June 2011, the school was subject to a notice to improve. A monitoring inspection visit, carried out in March 2012, judged the school to be making good progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Bernard Gilpin is a good school. It has made rapid improvements since the previous inspection. It is not yet outstanding because the achievement of pupils, their behaviour and the quality of teaching are good rather than outstanding. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.
- Children’s skills and abilities when they enter the Reception classes are broadly average, but weaker in some areas of early literacy and mathematical development. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average overall, although slightly lower in writing because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Teaching is mainly good and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge and a brisk pace to lessons. Occasionally work is not matched precisely enough to each pupil’s individual needs, there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and pupils do not always have time to respond to marking.
- Pupils’ behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. They talk with enthusiasm about the recent improvements to the school and take great pride in their achievements. Pupils say they feel very safe in school.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He is well supported by a governing body that now holds the school to account and senior and middle leaders who have risen to the challenge of improving the school. The impact of their work is evident in improvements in pupils’ achievement and their behaviour. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance ensure that the quality of teaching is rapidly improving, partly through high-quality opportunities for professional development for staff. However, the best practice is not fully shared across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing to match that of reading and mathematics by increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects across the curriculum, particularly when linked to educational visits.
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - ensuring that pupils' tasks are even more precisely matched to their individual needs
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to respond to marking
 - sharing some of the outstanding practice already within the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age but weaker in aspects of communication, language and literacy, calculation and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress because of the range of stimulating activities provided for them indoors and outdoors. They were fascinated when exploring the garden to find mini-beasts and when they observed an insect trapped in a spider's web. They also thoroughly enjoyed a mathematics session when they participated in some challenging activities through a range of interesting games and activities such as 'magic numbers'. There has been a rising trend in attainment over the last three years and by the time children enter Year 1, their attainment is now above average.

Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 from their starting points and although attainment has been broadly average in recent years, current results indicate that attainment is above average overall at the end of Key Stage 2 with strengths in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing is not quite as strong because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects across the curriculum, particularly when linked to educational visits. In most lessons, work is closely matched to pupils' individual needs and there is a good level of challenge. In an outstanding lesson, pupils were articulate and used a high level of language when writing poems because they were skilfully challenged by the teacher. They participated with enthusiasm and took great pride in their work. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the stimulating activities that are provided for them, often through practical activities indoors and outdoors. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their children were making good progress. Inspection evidence confirms their views.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making similar progress to that of their peers as they receive individual support during lessons and also short, sharp sessions tailored to their individual needs with a specialist teacher. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those who speak English as an additional language and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable also make good progress because of the effective support they receive.

Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1 and is now well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books on topics which interest them. Pupils are able to talk at length about their favourite books and authors and they read with expression. Their comprehension is good. Younger pupils use the sounds that letters make (phonics) to help them tackle unfamiliar words and older pupils are able to use higher order skills of inference and deduction well. Pupils are able to explain how their skills in reading are helping them to improve their writing.

Quality of teaching

The good quality of teaching is valued by pupils, parents and carers at the school. In the Reception classes, work is well matched to children's needs and there are effective staff interactions during child-initiated activities and adult-led sessions both indoors and outdoors. There are good opportunities for first-hand exploration and for children to find out things for themselves. There are many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills because of effective questioning by adults and through 'talk partner' sessions. Children's behaviour is good and they cooperate well together, sharing equipment and taking turns.

In Years 1 to 6, lessons are planned effectively and organised with a good range of resources, as for example, in an English lesson about using similes in poetry, pupils used pieces of fruit as a stimulus for their writing. In most lessons, different tasks are provided for pupils according to their needs and targeted support is given, but occasionally pupils' needs are not met as precisely as they could be. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported effectively within the classroom, often by skilled teaching assistants and they also receive individual and small-group tuition during short, daily sessions which has enabled them to make better progress. The vast majority of lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers use questioning strategies effectively. Teachers identify clearly what pupils are to learn and the steps they need to take to achieve their target. Throughout the lesson, teachers use assessment effectively to check on pupils' learning and reinforce concepts, where necessary. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use subject-specific vocabulary appropriately and give clear instructions to pupils so they know what they have to do. Occasionally, however, pupils do not have the chance to work independently if teacher-talk dominates the lesson. There have been significant improvements in the quality and quantity of work produced and in the presentation of pupils' work. Marking is carried out conscientiously, identifying what pupils have done well and also 'next steps' in learning. However, pupils say they are not always given enough time to respond to marking. Pupils say they really enjoy their learning as the activities are fun. They work effectively in teams and groups, developing their social skills and pupils are taught important spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through different aspects of the curriculum.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All pupils and their parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires indicated that pupils feel safe and the vast majority believes that behaviour is good. Behaviour has improved significantly and is now good, although on a few occasions inspectors observed some very minor off-task behaviour in lessons. Pupils are polite and courteous and show respect to each other, staff and visitors. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils confirm that bullying is rare and if there are any incidents,

they are promptly dealt with. There are now many activities for pupils to engage in at lunchtimes and playtimes and pupils say this has helped to improve behaviour.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet. They are aware of improvements to the buildings and school grounds to help keep them safe, such as raising the height of the fence around the outdoor area for Reception Year children. Pupils' enjoyment in school is reflected in their above-average attendance.

Leadership and management

The determination, high expectations and expertise of the headteacher are at the forefront of the school's improvement. This is acknowledged by the whole school community and, as one parent commented, 'the school has gone from strength to strength since the new headteacher came into post. His passion and enthusiasm shine out and he really has made a difference.' He is very well supported by a dynamic and enthusiastic team of senior and middle leaders who have accepted responsibility for the areas in which they lead and are able to demonstrate the impact of their work through improved teaching and pupils' achievement. There are effective performance management systems in place and staff value the high quality opportunities for professional development which are available to them. All staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make through regular pupil progress meetings and robust monitoring and evaluation of their work. There is some outstanding teaching in the school, but the school has acknowledged that they wish to provide more opportunities for staff to share this very good practice through coaching and mentoring. There have been significant and rapid improvements in achievement, the quality of teaching and in pupils' behaviour, self-evaluation is accurate and the school demonstrates a strong capacity to improve further towards the aim of becoming outstanding.

The effectiveness of the governing body has improved and governors now effectively hold the school to account through regular 'challenge meetings' and visits to the school in order to gain first-hand evidence of the improvements made. They take their statutory responsibilities very seriously and ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination. All pupils, regardless of their backgrounds are able to access all that the school has to offer and all pupils are making similar progress. One example of this is that both girls and boys have access to football training and their teams won the respective Sunderland schools' football tournaments. Safeguarding arrangements are given high priority and are very strong.

The curriculum is well planned, imaginative and effectively meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. It strongly promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development, although opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development are less evident. There are some very good examples of cross-curricular work, for example, a topic in Year 6 on 'the Titanic', and links between subjects make learning more meaningful for pupils. Reading and mathematical skills are developed across all subjects, but there is scope for teachers to plan more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. There is now a wide range of enrichment activities, including educational visits such as those to London, or Kielder Forest and after-school clubs which pupils greatly appreciate.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you very much for the warm welcome we received when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing about all the interesting things that you enjoy. You told us about the many ways in which your school has improved since the last inspection when it was given a 'notice to improve'.

We judged that Bernard Gilpin is now a good school. You are making good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics as well as in other areas, such as in football. We were delighted to hear that your football teams won the Sunderland championships. The teachers and other adults are working very hard to make your lessons interesting and teaching is now good. The headteacher, the governing body and other leaders manage the school well and are also working very hard to ensure that you get the best possible education. Your behaviour has improved and is now good and you all say that you feel safe in school.

Your parents and carers, the governing body and staff are very proud of the improvements made in the school. We would like the school to improve even further. To help that to happen, we have asked your headteacher and staff to help you to improve your writing further by giving you more chances to write about things you learn in other subjects and especially when you go on educational visits. We have also asked them to share the best ideas and help each other, make sure that you get time to correct or improve your work and that the work you are given is just right for you. We also think that you are capable of working more independently.

You can help by making sure you always listen carefully to your teachers and work very hard so that you all achieve the very best you can. It was a pleasure to meet you all and the inspection team wishes you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster
Her Majesty's Inspector

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