



# Birtley East Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108337  
**LEA** Gateshead  
**Inspection number** 277950  
**Inspection dates** 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Moira Fitzpatrick

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Highfield
<b>School category</b>	Community		Birtley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Chester le Street, County Durham
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4102551
<b>Number on roll</b>	233	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 4102551
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr M Hood
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Suthren

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277950
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors of schools.

## Description of the school

Birtley East Community Primary is a school of average size in Gateshead. Almost a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. There are seven pupils from minority ethnic groups, all but one of whom has English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and there are three pupils with a statement of special educational need. When children start in the nursery, many do not have the skills or knowledge that are typical of 3 year olds. Communication skills are notably weaker than other skills. Nearly one tenth of pupils joined or left the school in the last school year other than at the normal time of admission. The school has attained a number of awards in recent years, including the Gold Smoke Free School Award, the Healthy School Award and the Activemark Gold.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school is not effective in helping all pupils to make enough progress. Standards are too low, especially in English and mathematics, because the weaknesses that children have when they join Year 1 are not tackled effectively in the teaching from then until Year 6.

The school's leadership and management are inadequate because they do not give a clear direction to the work of the school. The headteacher does not focus the work of the school enough on raising standards in pupils' learning, though he places good emphasis on their personal development. Subject leaders are hampered from making necessary improvements because they are not given the time or resources to do so. Parents' and pupils' views are sought and both groups hold the school in high esteem because of the level of care the school provides which makes children feel safe and secure at school.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is adequate and enables them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave the reception class, most children have reached the targets set in all areas of their learning, except in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development where many, especially boys, are below the expected level.

There has been too little improvement since the last inspection. Standards and the quality of teaching have declined. The role of governors and the preparation of the school's development plan have not improved enough. Currently, there is no evidence that the school has the vision, commitment and expertise at the highest level to halt this decline. Financial planning is weak, so that funds for pupils' learning are not managed efficiently. Given the low standards that it achieves, the school is judged to give poor value for money.

.

### What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- improving the most senior leadership and management in the school
- improving standards in learning throughout the school
- improving the school's self-evaluation procedures and act on findings to set priorities
- improving school improvement planning
- improving financial management.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Children have low standards in many areas of their learning when they start in the nursery. An adequate range of learning experiences helps most of them progress to the expected standard in many areas of their learning by the end of reception. When children join Year 1, the standards they reach in mathematical knowledge and communication skills are still too low, especially for boys. In Years 1 and 2, there is not enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics for many pupils, because the low level of skills are not well enough recognised and overcome by teachers. At the end of Year 2, standards are still too low in these subjects. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is variable for different groups of pupils, and for different subjects. For example, by Year 6, higher attaining and some average pupils make the expected progress in English and science. On the other hand, many pupils, particularly boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, do not make enough progress, especially in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, too many pupils do not reach the standard expected based on their capability when they were in Year 2.

Standards have declined in recent years, reaching a very low point at the end of the 2003/04 school year. The test performance of Year 6 pupils in 2005 shows an improvement and indicates that most pupils in this group made expected progress in English and science but not in mathematics. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are benefitting now from specialist support, and good improvements to reading have been achieved in the last year for some of these pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development shows some good features. During their time at school, pupils become confident, learn to understand the need to show care and respect for others and are able to take on responsibilities in the school community. They are pleased with the improvements, such as new football posts, they have made to the school in recent years through the school council. Pupils who have worked on enterprise projects with local firms are also rightly proud of their achievements. Pupils behave well in and out of class, enjoy their lessons and work hard at the tasks set. Despite the school's strenuous efforts to improve attendance, this remains below the national average because a small number of parents do not send their children to school regularly enough.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequate overall. The moral development of pupils is well promoted through clear rules that are understood and agreed, so that pupils know right from wrong behaviour. Pupils' social skills are well developed in lessons when they work together, and in the many out of school activities that pupils enjoy. Pupils' cultural knowledge, especially that of other cultures is less well developed. The skills of communication and numeracy are not developed well enough in preparation for later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate because it does not ensure enough progress over time for all pupils. Teaching seen during inspection was well prepared, interesting for pupils and some of it was of good quality. However, too much teaching is not based on a sharp knowledge of the needs of different groups of pupils in the class. This means that there are often occasions when the tasks set for pupils are not challenging enough or are too difficult for some pupils to complete on their own. Not all teachers are picking up that pupils are not learning as fast as they could. One of the reasons for this is that the assessment methods the school uses have not been thoroughly developed or consistently used by all staff. In recent years, there have been too many changes to assessment methods, owing to the turnover in staff and lack of direction from the headteacher. The result is that teachers are confused and often make their own decisions about how and what to assess. Good assessment information gathered by teachers is not always being well used by the senior management team to identify a focus for improvement in the school and to provide additional support in classes where it is needed.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, so that pupils want to listen and learn in lessons. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and create a calm, secure place for learning. Teachers plan well structured lessons in English and mathematics that often allow pupils to work in groups so they develop good team skills. However, the emphasis that teachers place on developing and consolidating basic skills is not strong enough to help pupils overcome the weaknesses they have in English and mathematics. Pupils need more opportunities to use their communication and numeracy skills on a day to day basis. The application of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills is better developed.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn about a broad range of topics through the curriculum that teachers plan. Many pupils take advantage of the out of school clubs and activities that the school provides in dance, sport, music and gardening. The school's Gold Activemark recognises the wide range of provision for physical activities that pupils enjoy. The school places special emphasis on the personal, social and health education of its pupils. In recent years, it has gained regular Healthy School Awards for its provision in this area. Because of this emphasis, pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of a balanced diet. They also have a good awareness of the dangers of certain medicines and drugs, and of the need to take regular exercise. The school makes good links with other schools to provide additional learning experiences for pupils. Year 6 were very pleased with their week at a local secondary school this term

working on a wide range of ICT topics. Pupils do not have as much awareness of the traditions of cultures other than their own as they might.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care and welfare of pupils are of great importance to the school. The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and are watchful of changes in their concentration or mood in order to give support when needed. Because of this, pupils have confidence in their teachers to solve any problems they have and to show understanding if they have difficulties with their learning. Teachers' knowledge of pupils' learning is not as sharp as it could be and this affects the quality of their planning for different groups of pupils, so they do not always make enough progress. The bilingual support teacher makes contact with Asian families to ensure that they are informed about, and involved in, decisions about their children's education. The school's provision for Family Learning and the workshops it runs to help parents understand the curriculum benefit both children and parents.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Overall, the quality of leadership and management in the school is inadequate. The headteacher provides too little direction for the work of the school and does not place enough emphasis on raising standards in learning. Other members of the senior management team have a strong commitment to raising standards, but their efforts are hampered by a high turnover in staff and frequent changes to systems that should help to improve pupils' learning. Because subject leaders and senior managers are not given the time or the opportunity to gain a good knowledge of standards and the quality of teaching and learning, the school does not have enough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses to set priorities for improvement. This, and the lack of money to buy resources for learning, has led to frustration for some subject leaders who are keen to make improvements.

Too few people in the school, including governors, are involved in decision making. The school's planned developments cover too short a period and are not properly costed, so that the school's spending is not being managed effectively. Significant budget deficits in the past have made the headteacher cautious about spending. The result is that the school now has a large surplus in the budget while there are shortages in resources for learning throughout the school.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 0207 421 6800  
F 0207 421 6707  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Birtley East Community Primary School  
Highfield  
Birtley  
Chester le Street  
County Durham  
DH3 1QQ

30 September 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for giving us a warm welcome to your school and helping us do our work. You gave us a good picture of why you like your school and of the interesting things that you do there.

Here are the things that we liked most about your school

Your friendliness towards us and each other. You really do care for and look after each other.

You work and play together very well in and out of your classrooms.

You told us you enjoy your lessons and those we visited showed this.

You behave well everywhere in the school. In your lessons this helps everyone to learn and get on with work. Well done!

Your teachers work hard and care for you well.

Your headteacher knows you well and has good contact with your families.

Your school has lovely playgrounds and playing fields that you look after well and don't spoil with litter.

You take an interest in making the school better and help the school council to suggest good improvements.

What we have asked your school to do now

Improve your learning in English, mathematics and science so you get even better at these subjects.

Give you more advice on how to improve your work so you can play a part in getting better.

Help teachers agree ways to increase your learning by knowing what you need to do next.

Increase how much it spends on your learning materials such as books, and equipment to do investigations in mathematics and science.

Thank you all once again for your warm welcome and the way you helped us.

Best wishes for the rest of the year.

Mrs M Fitzpatrick

Lead Inspector

Annex B