



Beech Hill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108441
LEA Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 277971
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Heather Evans

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Linhope Road
School category	Community		West Denton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2678113
Number on roll	254	Fax number	0191 2641240
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Karen Turville
Date of previous inspection	1 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Gary Wallis

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school in a very deprived area of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. More than half of the pupils claim free school meals. About a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Both these proportions are above the national average. Almost all of the pupils are white British although a small number from minority ethnic groups speak a language other than English at home. On entry to the nursery pupils' attainment is well below that usually found for children of the same age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence supports the school's view that this is a good school with a number of outstanding features. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve very well from low starting points and attain standards at the level expected nationally. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is close to the expected level. Taking into consideration the above average number of pupils with learning disabilities, pupils' progress, achievement and personal development are good. There are strengths in many areas of the curriculum, especially in mathematics and science. In English, the strategies to improve pupils' skills in writing and reading are working well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across the curriculum. The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are good. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, although not all children achieve the expected learning goals. The strategies established to improve the nursery and reception class are being implemented successfully. The school works very effectively with the local community and with outside agencies. The provision of care provided by the teachers and the support staff for all pupils is outstanding. Parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. All the issues identified previously have been addressed and the school provides good value for money. Leadership and management are good, as is the school's capacity to improve.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

In order to raise standards the school should:

- raise standards in English across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards and achievement are good overall. From well below average attainment on entry, pupils make very good progress overall and reach average standards by Year 2. The 2005 results in mathematics at Year 2 were good, but the boys' performance in both reading and writing depressed the overall figures. At Year 6, the 2004 national test results were outstanding; the pupils' achievement that year was very high. The 2005 results were slightly lower although the pupils still achieved well and the school's targets were exceeded by a considerable margin. The progress made between Years 2 and 6 in each of the core subjects is better than the national picture and is particularly strong in science. The school has identified writing as an area in need of improvement, and has put in place an intensive programme of staff development. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and clear targets for writing are set for individuals within each year group. The indications are that results in writing will rise in this year's tests.

Standards and achievement have improved considerably since 2003 because teaching has improved and expectations throughout the school are higher.

Lower ability pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not the first language, make as much progress as their peers. Higher achieving pupils do particularly well. An above average proportion reach the higher levels in mathematics and science at both Year 2 and 6. In line with the national picture, girls slightly outperform boys at Year 2, but there is little gender difference in standards by Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the school's positive ethos for learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are interested in their lessons and eager to do well. Attendance is improving and lessons start on time. The positive behaviour programme provides pupils with clear expectations that they understand and appreciate. Most pupils follow the school's expected code and their self-esteem is high. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils are trusted. They are polite and socially responsible when talking to and working with others.

One result of the impressive range of activities is that this was one of the first schools in the city to gain the top level of the healthy schools award. Pupils benefit from the extensive programme of creative, physical and sporting activities. The school is currently benefiting through its 'Year of the Arts' programme. Teachers and pupils learn new skills together and pupils' awareness and understanding of different traditions, values and cultures are enriched. During 'Discovery week' each term, pupils share in activities that promote strategies for their future well-being.

Pupils make an important contribution to the life of the school through the school council. The few pupils who do not attend school regularly and the small number that struggle to manage their behaviour prevent this aspect of school life being outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and some lessons in Years 3 to 6 were outstanding. Pupils work collaboratively on tasks that capture their interest and encourage them to think and reason. Many work well independently and know that help is readily available should they need it. The intention of the school is that pupils will succeed whatever difficulties they face and teachers implement this plan successfully. Teachers know their pupils well and plan work that builds on earlier achievements. Teachers ask questions that lead pupils to find out in manageable steps what they need to know and understand even when the work is very challenging.

In most cases lessons move at a fast pace and learning is fun. Teachers use information and communication effectively to help the learning process. Completed work is marked

carefully and teachers offer guidance to pupils about how they might meet their agreed targets. All teachers require pupils to present their work neatly.

Good support enables pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language to make good progress. Behaviour is good because a structured and well organised policy includes a range of sanctions. At the end of lessons pupils are encouraged to listen to what others have done, to celebrate good quality work and to praise what they like. Pupils are encouraged to review work critically and to suggest possible improvements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum fulfils all statutory requirements and emphasises the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school is very keen to make learning interesting and enjoyable for the pupils. Spanish is taught and there are regular 'discovery' weeks when a variety of countries, faiths and cultures are studied. The school is currently having a 'Year of the Arts' in which pupils have a wide range of cultural experiences and work with skilled artists and musicians. On special days the whole school focuses on one of the foundation subjects such as the geography day based on 'Dora the Explorer'.

A good range of enrichment activities includes visits, visitors, sports, the arts and revision opportunities. The school reviews its curriculum constantly and is actively seeking ways to involve pupils more by taking responsibility for their

own learning, being aware of what they need to do to improve, and using a range of learning styles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All pupils are cared for outstandingly well. The school's ethos is calm and supportive. Staff are well trained and are fully committed to pupils' welfare. Teachers help pupils to learn the principles of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils say they feel safe and explain how adults help them to build trusting relationships.

Pupils who have barriers to learning are supported very well by staff who organise opportunities for pupils to discuss problems. Teachers work well with parents to meet pupils' needs. Effective links with the local secondary school aid pupils' transition to the next stage of their education. Pupils contribute fully in planning their learning experiences. They know what they have learned already and are very clear about how they might improve. The school goes out of its way to work with other agencies and parents. Child protection is secure and risk assessments are carried out rigorously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is very energetic and highly committed to the school and the local community. He has a clear vision of how he wants the school to develop as a community resource and he has been very successful in getting others to share that vision. He has an accurate and perceptive knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and is resolved to bring about improvements urgently. An intensive programme of monitoring and support has improved the quality of teaching and brought about a considerable rise in standards. As a direct result of the headteacher's charismatic leadership, aspirations have been raised throughout the school.

The headteacher makes sure that many staff are effective in sharing leadership responsibilities. The deputy headteacher has a strong presence around the school and has forged a very effective partnership with the headteacher. The core subject coordinators lead their subjects well. They have a good knowledge of standards throughout the school and have well conceived plans for improving them.

The school council plays an important role in the everyday life of the school and gives its members good experience of responsible decision making.

Recent necessary capital expenditure and some unavoidable staff absences have resulted in a deficit budget but there are plans in place to eliminate the shortfall within a year. The governing body is mainly new in post but is increasingly aware of the need to hold the school to account. They are in full support of what the senior managers are seeking to achieve. The school has a good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
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

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Mr Gary Wallis

Beech Hill Primary School

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Tyne and Wear

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24 January 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. Please let everybody know how much we enjoyed sharing your work. Beech Hill is a friendly school where you are learning and working together well.

There are many good things going on in your school, particularly the following.

You work and learn in a happy place and it is good to see that you get on well with one another. Your work in English, mathematics, science and ICT is good. Your writing is getting better and this is helping you in other subjects.

Your teachers work hard and care for you extremely well by planning interesting lessons and activities such as Discovery week. They help you to learn well.

The places you visit and the many visitors to the school have helped to give you a better understanding of the wider world.

You have begun to do well in your tests because most of you come to school every day except when you are ill. You have learned that by behaving well everything you do is better and that lessons are good fun where everyone can learn.

There are no important things wrong with your school but it could be even better. We know that Mr Wallis and the other staff and governors have already begun to help you to make that happen.

You have started to work hard to reach your personal targets in all of your subjects but you need to make even more effort with your work in English. You need to listen carefully, speak clearly and do your very best to get better at reading and writing so that you can build on the success of the school in all that you do.

Thank you

Heather Evans and all of the inspection team