



Bamburgh School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108738
LEA South Tyneside
Inspection number 278037
Inspection dates 23 March 2006 to 24 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Noreen Buckingham

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Special | School address | Norham Avenue |
| School category | Community special | | South Shields |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 16 | | Tyne and Wear, NE34 7TD |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0191 4540671 |
| Number on roll | 142 | Fax number | 0191 4271931 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs Pat Morris |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 January 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Lynn McKellar |

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Bamburgh is a day special school. Most pupils have a physical difficulty or a medical problem. A growing number have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), 16 of whom are placed in the Alnwick Unit. The older pupils in this unit are integrated in the main school. A small number of pupils are diagnosed as having school phobia. Because of their learning difficulties, young pupils' attainment on entry is low for their age. Some older pupils are within the average range but have had poor attendance records. All pupils have statements of special educational need. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school is moving into a new building co-located with a large primary school in the autumn term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection judgement agrees with the school's own evaluation that it is a good school providing its pupils with a good education. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides determined leadership to drive school improvement but subject leaders are not involved enough in monitoring and improving their subjects. Governors fully support the school but they are not sufficiently active in monitoring its work. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils achieve well. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they achieve well. The school does not have systems for assessment that can be used consistently. Although many older pupils know their targets, the school does not have secure arrangements for tracking pupils' progress. Data on pupils' performance are insufficient for analysis to identify areas for improvement. The curriculum is good with good enrichment opportunities. Pupils acquire good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) but they have few opportunities to develop these through work in other subjects. Pupils' personal development is good because of the high levels of care and support. Parents are very happy with what the school offers. The school gives good value for money.

Issues arising from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled except the inconsistencies in assessment procedures. However, the school is showing it has the capacity to make further improvements and move forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop systems that will give a more accurate view of pupils' progress and enable the school to track progress more easily.
- Create opportunities in all lessons for pupils to use their ICT skills.
- Develop a more active role for governors to monitor the school's progress.
- Involve subject leaders more in monitoring their subjects so that improvements can be made.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards are low, the pupils' achievement is good overall. The school's judgement that achievement is outstanding is too generous. The majority of pupils' attainment on entry is low because of their learning difficulties but some older, vulnerable pupils have average ability. All pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or learning difficulty make good progress in relation to their capabilities. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They settle into school very well, develop confidence and show good levels of concentration. This enables them to make good progress. Pupils with ASD achieve well and many are routinely integrated into the main school classes. All pupils are fully included in all the activities provided. All pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and those who find communication difficult try very hard and do equally well. Older pupils achieve well in nationally accredited examinations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all good. This contrasts slightly with the schools' judgement that they are outstanding. Pupils develop good levels of maturity and confidence because of the good personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) they receive. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good. Attendance figures are average. Absences are mainly caused by ill-health. Pupils like their school and are positive about what it does for them. Older pupils would like more opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and choices, especially as the school moves to a new building.

Pupils understand the need to develop healthy lifestyles and take advantage of the many opportunities to take part in sport. They show a good awareness of keeping safe and are confident that they can speak to any adult if they have a problem. The Young Enterprise scheme enables older pupils to develop economic awareness and all pupils have a strong commitment to raising funds for good causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Owing to consistently good teaching, all pupils learn well. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and good teamwork in classrooms is a particularly strong feature of lessons. Very positive relationships between adults and pupils also support pupils' learning. Planning varies in quality. The best provides clear details about individual needs. At other times learning objectives are not as focused as they should be and this underlines the weaknesses in the school's systems for assessing pupils' progress.

The very secure subject knowledge of teachers in the secondary department is significant in supporting pupils' ability to learn and make good progress. Good levels of questioning check what pupils have understood and encourage them to explain and extend their ideas. All pupils are encouraged to work as independently as they can and this leads to high levels of concentration. They enjoy practical lessons, such as life skills, and can explain how they have made omelettes or 'eggy' bread.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very well organised and children show a very high level of interest and an eagerness to talk about what they are doing. The oldest children can work independently on given tasks and, because of good support, the youngest are keen to explore all the planned activities on offer. All staff record any little step of achievement during the day and use the information well in planning children's work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils. The recent changes to the timetable have had a very positive effect on the range of subjects pupils can study. Nationally accredited examinations include: General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in English, mathematics, science, French, design and technology and art, and Entry Level Certificate in English, mathematics and French. Other accreditations enable pupils to study ICT, hairdressing, engineering and travel and tourism. The range of subjects offered reflects the school's determination to allow pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Literacy and numeracy are well promoted and the PHSCE curriculum provides good opportunities to develop life skills. This is further enhanced by good careers provision, work related learning and college links, all of which are a good introduction to the world of work. Vocational options are increasing but pupils would like more choice in what they study after Year 9. Whilst ICT skills are well developed, they are not used sufficiently in other subjects. Lunchtime and after-school clubs extend pupils' learning experiences and visitors enhance subjects such as art, music and pupils' cultural development. The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme adds another dimension to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and parents are equally confident. Teachers are good role models and pupils are treated with respect. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive so pupils know they will be helped if they have a problem. Good attention is given to health and safety, including risk assessments, and child protection procedures are secure. Good support is available from Connexions, health professionals and other education personnel. Most older pupils know their targets and are involved in their own annual reviews. However, whole school procedures for tracking pupils' progress are weak because there are not enough data.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and shows drive and determination to move the school forward. The senior management team gives good support and the governors strongly support the new initiatives that have been introduced and share the commitment for improvement. The school's self-evaluation procedures provide a largely accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. The school development plan identifies the most important targets.

An increased number of staff are involved in managing the school and in taking responsibility for improvement. They have a good understanding of what needs to be

improved to raise pupils' achievements further. This awareness has been enhanced, for example, by the participation of some staff in the Primary Leadership Training Programme. However, subject leaders play a limited part in improving provision in their subjects and in raising pupils' achievement. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is undertaken mainly by the headteacher.

Each department, and sometimes individual teachers, have their own methods for assessing pupils' progress and use this information to set individual targets which are regularly reviewed. Older pupils know their targets and what they have to do to improve. However, the school has recognised that it does not have an overall system for moderating or analysing the little data it has to check for accuracy or to add a further dimension to planning improvements.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and the chairman, who is a frequent visitor, knows the school well. The governing body as a whole, however, is not actively involved in checking and evaluating how well the school is doing against the targets in the development plan. Making decisions about the new building has taken up a lot of their time.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 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 | 3 | 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

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 | 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

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|
| 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 | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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? | 2 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 3 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | 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 |

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| 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 | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | Yes |

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

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

Mrs Lynn McKellar

Bamburgh School

Norham Avenue

South Shields

Tyne and Wear

NE34 7TD

24 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me and my colleague so welcome in your school last week. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. You gave us valuable insights into how your school is run and how well you are all cared for. We listened to senior pupils who said they would like a different uniform in the secondary department and how they would like more choices in the subjects you study. Your headteacher and teachers will think about this. Some of the things we particularly noted were:

your good behaviour and how well you work in lessons

how very happy your parents are with what the school does for you

how the curriculum has been extended and is giving you a wider range of opportunities

the way all the adults in school take care of you all equally and how you all get on very well together

how the headteacher and staff make decisions with your best interests at heart to try and make your school even better.

I have asked your headteacher and governors to make your school even better by:

encouraging all governors to be more involved in all aspects of what goes on in school

providing more opportunities for you to use your computer skills in more lessons

giving teachers who are responsible for leading subjects a stronger role in helping you make even better progress

looking more closely at how well you are doing and checking to see if you can do even better.

Keep up the good work in your new school.

Best wishes

Noreen Buckingham

Lead inspector