



Cockton Hill Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114110
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279316
Inspection dates 9 March 2006 to 10 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	McIntyre Terrace
School category	Community		Cockton Hill
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Bishop Auckland, County Durham
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01388 602058
Number on roll	247	Fax number	01388 602058
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Jeff Sutton
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Fran Thirling

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is average size. Almost all pupils come from white British heritage groups, with less than 4% from minority ethnic groups. There is one pupil who speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is slightly above average, so too is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The percentage of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need is about average. The attainment of pupils when they join the school at seven is broadly average. The school has gained a number of awards since the last inspection including the Healthy School Award and the Active Mark.

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 this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and attendance.

The school's view of its overall effectiveness is inaccurate because it has not gathered a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses in recent years. Although it has begun to discover why standards have declined, recent action has not yet had a strong impact on raising standards quickly for all pupils. Therefore, inspectors judge the school's current effectiveness to be inadequate and because of this also judge it does not give satisfactory value for money. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is inadequate, because teaching and curriculum provision for these pupils does not take enough account of their different needs to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. Elsewhere, teaching is satisfactory overall. Most pupils make expected progress and by Year 6 standards are close to average. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory, with strengths in the way that pupils take on responsibility and make improvements to the school. The care and welfare of pupils is satisfactory overall, though a significant minority of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leadership and management are currently inadequate, but action taken last term has raised standards in Year 6. However, more detailed information about pupils' progress is unavailable to teachers so they cannot plan effectively to raise standards throughout the school. While key subject leaders have the expertise to carry out this work, they have not been given enough opportunity to do this. This is now planned for. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because the school has not been alert enough to the decline in standards. Nevertheless, given recent improvements and the expertise of key staff, the school does have the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching for pupils who have learning difficulties.
- Strengthen the role of the school's leaders and managers in identifying barriers to pupils' achievement and in taking action to remove them.
- Take determined action to raise levels of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate because a significant minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they might given their starting points in Year 3. The school's results in national

tests last year were close to the average in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils made expected progress, but a significant number did not. The percentage of pupils who reached the higher level was close to the school's target, while lower attaining pupils, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, did not reach the targets that were expected. A similar picture is found now in Years 3 to 5, where pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are underachieving. These pupils, who account for about one fifth of each year group, are hampered from making expected progress because they are not taught at a level which matches their capability. In the last three years, the school's test performance has improved in mathematics, while it has declined in English and, until this year, the school has not identified the weaknesses in provision which account for this. Predicted results for this year are similar to last year's, despite this group joining the school with slightly higher attainment in Year 3. However, these may be exceeded given the improvements to provision in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. One of the strengths is pupils' behaviour, which is consistently good in lessons and helps create a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils' good relationships with each other also make a positive contribution to their learning, as they show respect for whoever is speaking and are keen to help each other with tasks. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and are keen to make suggestions for school improvements through their class and school councils. They have been particularly pleased with improvements to the toilets and the playground in the last year. Parents are pleased that the school listens to the views of their children. Pupils respond well to the school's programme for healthy living and personal safety. The attendance of a significant minority of pupils is very low, with some pupils whose attendance is below 90%. Despite the school's efforts, it has not been effective in bringing about any significant improvement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in most lessons, with some examples of good teaching, teaching overall is inadequate because pupils who have learning difficulties do not make enough progress. In the best lessons, teachers engage the pupils well using the interactive whiteboards to provide visual stimulus as well as a range of strategies, such as talking partners, to help pupils develop their own ideas and contribute to lessons. When teaching is no more than satisfactory, teachers have insecure subject knowledge, and tasks are not pitched at the correct level, being either too hard or too easy. In these lessons, pupils have to take very little responsibility for their own learning. There is some very good practice in marking in Year 6 but this is not used uniformly throughout the school. Teachers' planning does not draw sufficiently

on assessment information to match work closely to the needs of different groups of pupils. Low attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties and disabilities are taught English and mathematics mainly by teaching assistants or the special needs co-ordinator. They do not benefit from the same quality of resources as other pupils, nor is their work assessed or planned in enough detail to ensure they make the same progress as other groups of pupils, especially in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met and, in addition, French is taught to all year groups. The school has recognised the needs of the most able and talented pupils and is making satisfactory provision for them. The provision to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is unsatisfactory as it is not sufficiently focused on the individual needs of these pupils. The school is proud of its work in art and design and design and technology and some good examples are on display.

Pupils are given clear information about how to keep safe, to be healthy and to accept responsibility. A programme of personal, health, social and citizenship education is taught to groups that include pupils from Years 3 to 6; this tends to lessen its impact in dealing with the particular needs of older and younger pupils. The pupils enjoy the wide range of extracurricular activities organised to enhance the curriculum, especially sporting clubs, which are well attended. A good range of visits and visitors also enriches the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. Staff know pupils well and are fully committed to their welfare. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are effective. Risk assessments are regularly carried out. Pupils feel safe and know they have someone to go to if they are worried. Adults are positive role models and foster good relationships which help to eliminate bullying and racism. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties are supported partly with the help of outside agencies. Sound links with local high schools ease pupils' transition to the next stage of their education.

Most pupils' attainment is reviewed regularly but not through a system that enables the efficient tracking of their progress. The progress in writing of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not monitored to ensure they progress at the same rate as other pupils. Assessment is not, therefore, being used sufficiently well to drive up standards for this group of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because they are not sufficiently focused on raising standards for all groups of pupils through the rigorous monitoring of standards and provision. While subject leaders have the expertise to carry out the work, they have not been given the opportunity to do so. The result is that weaknesses in provision for pupils with learning difficulties, and their consequent underachievement, have gone undetected. However, action taken in response to last year's national test results has had a positive effect on standards in Year 6. The recently appointed assessment leader has introduced a workable tracking system so that now teachers regularly monitor the progress of their pupils. These improvements demonstrate that the school has the capacity to make further improvements to standards. While governors are supportive of the school, their monitoring activities are not sufficiently focused on standards or teaching and learning, so they are not in a position to challenge the school on any weaknesses here. Standards have declined since the last inspection, so that while the school has made good progress in some areas, such as the provision of computers and technological aids for teaching and learning, its overall improvement has been unsatisfactory.

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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?	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	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

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

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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DL14 6HW

11 March 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and learning about the things you enjoy in school. Here are some of the things we liked best about your school:

Your behaviour is good, which means that everyone can get on with their work in lessons.

We agree with you that your teachers know you well and look after you if you have problems or don't feel well.

We think you work hard and deserve the success you have with your learning.

We liked the displays of your art and your design and technology models. You had taken great care so they looked well-made and attractive.

We think your work through class councils and the school council is making real improvements to the school. Well done - keep it up!

We agree with those of you who thought you could take on more responsibility, even though you do quite a lot already. Good for you, this will make you good citizens.

To make your school better, we have asked the headteacher and teachers to make sure that the work you are all set in class helps you to make good progress and makes you want to learn more. We have also asked for your school to do more to improve the attendance of those who don't come to school regularly, because it is so important that you all learn good skills in readiness for secondary school.

Thank you again for your warm welcome. It was really nice to meet you. Best wishes for the rest of the year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector