



New Brancepeth Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114119
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279318
Inspection dates 19 January 2006 to 20 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Allison

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	New Brancepeth
School category	Community		Durham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		County Durham, DH7 7EU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3730736
Number on roll	117	Fax number	0191 3730736
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Bell
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr Chris Armstrong

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school for children aged 3 – 11. The nursery serves several surrounding villages, is an outreach centre and admits children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities placed there by the local authority. The nursery also offers extended day care. Socio-economic deprivation is higher than in most schools. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is well above most schools. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing and at 45% is high in comparison with most schools. Very few children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no children for whom English is an additional language. Attainment on entry to school fluctuates, but personal development and language skills are often well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

New Brancepeth is a satisfactory, but improving school. It gives satisfactory value for money. The school has tackled previously identified shortcomings successfully and has the capacity to improve further. The school's own assessment of its effectiveness is accurate. The school is working successfully to improve links with parents, the overwhelming majority of whom have confidence in the school. One parent wrote, 'I found the offer of learning techniques helpful in the after school sessions to help support children's learning at home'. It is a very welcoming school. The children are friendly and talk enthusiastically about school and the wide range of opportunities provided. They want to do well and know what they have to do to improve. The school provides good levels of care, guidance and support for its pupils. The children's personal and social development is good. Standards are satisfactory but they vary from year to year because what children know or can do when they start school also varies. The achievement of all groups of children, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities, is satisfactory, but children's progress in literacy is constrained by their limited vocabularies. Teaching is satisfactory, but improving, as is the progress children make. This improvement led to a significant rise in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2005. Lessons are not always based on prior learning and too little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) in English and mathematics. The curriculum is good and provides a rich experience for the children. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and children settle quickly into school so that standards were close to those expected for their age at the end of the Foundation Stage in 2005.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, who has high expectations, is perceptive about children's achievement and what needs to be done to raise standards. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide opportunities in all subjects to extend children's vocabulary.
- Ensure that challenging activities are provided consistently to take account of what different groups of children already know and can do.
- Make better use of information and communication technology to support learning particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The attainment of children starting school varies from year to year from broadly average to well below average. Language and social skills are the weakest aspects of their attainment. Progress is satisfactory overall but those who left the Reception class in 2005 made good progress and attained standards that were close to those expected for their age. The children's achievement is satisfactory. The national test results fluctuate because of the differences between the year groups. In 2005, the Key Stage 1 results were well below those of other schools because few children attained the

higher levels. The Key Stage 2 results were significantly better than those in 2004, being broadly average in English and mathematics. Science results were lower because only 17 per cent of children reached the higher level. The school has analysed test results thoroughly and is taking steps to raise standards. The school came close to meeting its challenging targets. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other children because they are identified early and given good help.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of all the children are good. Children demonstrate a mature approach and talk confidently about how they enjoy school. This is reflected in recently improved levels of attendance. They are well informed about how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. They value particularly the very good opportunities the school provides to exercise through play and sports. The proud members of the recently formed School Council have a good understanding of how they represent the views of others. Children take their roles seriously, particularly when helping other children via the 'buddy' system.

The school prepares its children well for life-long learning and their economic well-being as shown by the way they work together and want to do well. Bullying is not a problem because behaviour has improved and is now good. One child said, 'There's a lot of people here and it's easy to get along with them'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children appreciate the opportunities to learn about other faiths and meet people from other cultures when they visit the school or, as one boy said, when they play against other schools whose teams include children from other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and in some lessons they are good. Most children have made good progress recently but it has not yet had time to be reflected in higher attainment in the national tests. The teaching includes effective strategies to improve learning. The pace of learning is brisk. Teachers plan interesting activities that in the best lessons are matched carefully to the different groups and fully engages the attention of all learners. However, this is not always the case; some tasks do not take enough account of what children already know and can do. An almost exemplary feature of a lesson with children in Years 5 and 6 was the time allocated by the teacher for children to read and reflect on the comments on the previous day's work. This really helped children to know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Nevertheless, the school provides too few opportunities for children to improve their speaking and listening or to use ICT to support learning. Good marking is a feature of

the teaching. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning whether in the classroom or when leading art or ICT sessions. Children with learning difficulties benefit from the help they receive and learn as well as others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, fulfilling all statutory requirements, is good. It meets the needs of all children, including those in the Foundation Stage and those placed in the nursery by the local authority because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The emphasis on personal development in specific lessons and in all other activities is a good foundation on which the school is building in its drive to raise standards. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of visitors and outings, including the new residential experience, about which older children talked enthusiastically. Other strong features of the enrichment are those for physical education and sports, including benefiting from a local gymnastics centre of excellence, the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language and to perform for parents and the community, particularly at Christmas. The curriculum helps to prepare children well for life after they leave school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for all children. The school has good procedures to ensure that staff and children are safe. Children know that if they have any concerns they will be taken seriously so they become confident about sharing their feelings and ask for help when they need it. Child protection systems are appropriate and staff undertake regular training.

Children who may be vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good help. Children have targets so they know what they have to do to improve. A strength of the school is the way it has, in the past 15 months, built up its partnership with parents so that they are better equipped to help their children at home. The Family Learning Project won an award for its contribution to Education in the Community. Improving attendance also reflects the impact of this partnership with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with a number of good features. Under the perceptive guidance of the headteacher, the new senior leadership team and all other staff are working well together to drive up standards. The school expects that children's improved personal development, for example the heightened self-esteem promoted through the celebration assemblies, will lead to better achievement. The headteacher saw a need for the role and skills of the subject leaders to be extended so that they are now better placed to contribute to whole school evaluation and to set priorities for raising standards. The school promotes equal opportunities and has

deployed teachers and learning support assistants to raise achievement. This is well illustrated by the reorganisation of the Foundation Stage which provides well for all children within it, including those who are part of the extended care provision and those who are placed there by the local authority.

All the shortcomings identified by the previous inspection have been addressed, illustrating the school's capacity for further improvement. The main improvement in science is the children's ability to plan and carry out investigations. Work is well presented. Attendance improved very little until recently, but the figure for last term was above the national average. Marking is consistently good across the school and is a major factor in children knowing what they have achieved and what they have to do to improve further.

The governors know the school well. Systems for self-evaluation are well established and take account of the views of parents and pupils. Governors manage the school's finances well and follow up spending decisions to assess their effectiveness.

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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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The Children

New Brancepeth Primary School

New Brancepeth

Durham

County Durham

DH7 7EU

23 Jan 2006

Dear Children

Following my visit to your school last week I would like to thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons.

I can see why you are proud of your school because:

your teachers and other adults in the school work hard to help you to do your best and to be safe and looked after in school

you enjoy learning and behave well

you listen carefully to what others in your classes say and are proud to take on responsibilities

you enjoy taking part in a number of extra activities other than lessons

you have a headteacher who knows what the school should do to help you to do your very best and the other teachers and adults fully support him in this

There are three things I have asked the school to do to make it better. The school should:

continue to help you to extend your vocabulary in order to do better in reading and writing

ensure that the tasks you are given take account of what you already know and provide a challenge so that you can do better

use information and communication technology more to help you to do better, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Thank you again for making me feel welcome. Keep trying to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison

The Inspector