



Bearpark Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114129
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279320
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Colliery Road
School category	Community		Bearpark
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Durham, County Durham
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3848958
Number on roll	111	Fax number	0191 3831904
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Donald Ross
Date of previous inspection	1 April 2000	Headteacher	Mr Les Owen

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	Inspection number 279320
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small village school just outside the city of Durham. It mainly serves the children of the village, an ex-mining community with some deprivation. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below average and almost two fifths of pupils have learning difficulties. The pupil population is fairly stable.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Bearpark Primary School does not provide an effective education for its pupils. This conflicts with the school's own view that it is a good school. However, there are some good features. The pupils enjoy school. It provides a happy and supportive environment in which the pupils rightly feel safe and valued. They develop well personally and grow into sensible and sociable young people. The provision in the Reception class is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress during their first year at school. However, standards are too low in Year 6 and should be higher in English, mathematics and science. This has consistently been the situation for some time because teachers do not expect enough of the pupils. The pace of learning is often too slow and pupils' achievement could be so much better. Despite these important shortcomings, teaching has some good features, but the school has yet to capitalise on them. The curriculum is sound and enriched with a varied and exciting range of activities in and out of school.

The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory and has kept the school on an even keel. However, there are weaknesses in the management of the school. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress is not effective enough to show the teachers how to raise standards. Similarly, the governors are not effective enough at monitoring the school's performance. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is inaccurate and overgenerous; its planning for improvement is weak because it gives teachers too little guidance about improving their work and raising standards. Nevertheless, the school has made some progress since the previous inspection, particularly in raising the attendance rate and improving the curriculum. As a result of this inspection, the school now has a much clearer understanding of what needs to be improved and has the capacity to make the necessary improvements. Overall, the school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

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 might reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching, standards in English, mathematics and science, and the effectiveness of the school's management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of their pupils so that the work set for them provides the challenge required to improve their progress at a faster pace.
- Ensure that the headteacher, staff and governors are more rigorous in their monitoring of standards and the quality of education provided, with a particular focus on teaching and learning.
- Improve the school's planning for improvement, concentrating on improving teaching and raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is only just satisfactory overall and there are some weaknesses. Pupils do not make as much progress as they could and as a result, standards remain below average and have done so for a long time.

Pupils join the Reception class with below average attainment and make satisfactory progress, although standards are still below average by the time they are ready for Year 1. In Year 2, the 2005 results of national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were below average. In the current Year 2, pupils are also likely to achieve below average results because too few of them are working at the level expected for children of this age. In Year 6, the results of national tests are consistently below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards should be higher and are not, mainly because the teachers' expectations for some pupils are too low.

The achievement of boys and girls is similar. Although boys achieved better results than girls in the 2005 national tests for Year 6, this is not typical of the pattern of results as girls sometimes outperform boys. In the current Year 6, there are more pupils than usual with learning difficulties, which adversely affects overall standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and this judgement matches the school's own assessment. Pupils enjoy their work and look forward to coming to school, which helps to explain why attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils get on well together. They are mostly considerate in class and in the playground, and their behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils say that occasional incidents of bad behaviour are well dealt with, although restless and thoughtless behaviour sometimes disturbs the flow of pupils' learning. On the whole, however, pupils and parents have few concerns.

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' cultural development and contribution to the local community are particularly good. The school benefits from interesting visits from theatre groups, for example, African musicians. Pupils take part in a local dance festival and sing Christmas carols in the village. Their spiritual development is satisfactory and they develop their self-esteem well.

Pupils feel safe and cared for. They understand the need to eat healthily and which food types make up a balanced diet. They also appreciate the value of exercise, as seen in the popularity of sport in the after school clubs. Pupils rightly feel that their views are valued by the school, especially through the school council. Pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy are lower than average, however, and this makes their move to secondary education harder for them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The inspection findings do not match the school's view that teaching is good. Although teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, its shortcomings account for the weaknesses in the pupils' achievement. The work of teaching assistants, especially when supporting pupils with learning difficulties, is satisfactory.

In most classes, there is a positive working atmosphere. Teachers present new topics clearly and helpfully so that pupils know what they have to learn. Teachers use resources imaginatively to reinforce learning; for example, in one lesson seen, Reception class children concentrated hard to match initial sounds to hidden objects buried in the sandpit. Most teachers use the new interactive whiteboards effectively to clarify ideas and to motivate the pupils. Teachers are good at marking work and pupils say that they appreciate the guidance this gives them about improving their work. The main weakness in teaching is that the teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. Although the teachers vary the work to allow for pupils of different abilities, the work is often not challenging enough and the pace of lessons is too slow. Teachers do not set sufficiently tight deadlines for pupils to complete work in lessons and sometimes do not ensure that restless behaviour is checked promptly enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although the curriculum is satisfactory the inspection findings do not match the school's view that it is good. There are sensible frameworks for each subject which help the teachers to meet the needs of mixed year classes. Pupils with learning difficulties receive satisfactory support through individual learning plans and special help. Pupils benefit from a wide and interesting range of visits, visitors, and after school clubs such as team games, fencing, fishing, and making greetings cards.

Boys and girls and pupils of different abilities and aptitudes benefit equally from the curriculum. Although the teachers link the different subjects to help pupils to improve their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ITC), they do not make the most of all such opportunities. The sizeable and well stocked library and upgraded computer room are valuable resources for the school, and help to motivate pupils well in their reading and in ICT. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory. An adequate blend of independent activity and directed learning is planned although sometimes the learning is too controlled by the teacher who could encourage greater independence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall, this aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. The inspection findings confirm the school's judgement that pupils are cared for, guided and supported well. There are good systems in place that are regularly monitored to ensure that pupils are protected and secure, and the pupils certainly appreciate them. Pupils also feel comfortable about confiding in adults at the school if a personal problem arises. There is a good emphasis on health education and pupils are actively encouraged to make healthy choices in their diet and to take exercise. Parents have a good opinion of the school and support school activities when they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory overall. This conflicts with the school's view that they are good. The headteacher's leadership is satisfactory. He is hard working and has ensured a positive atmosphere for learning. In recent years, he has strengthened several aspects of the school; for example, pupils' attendance and the curriculum have improved substantially. There are, however, some important shortcomings in the management of the school. The headteacher and senior teachers have not succeeded in raising standards sufficiently since the previous inspection. This is mainly because the school's self-evaluation is not rigorous enough. Although the strengths of the teaching are recognised, the weaknesses are not clearly identified. The planning for improvement is also a weakness. The priorities the school has identified for improvement, connected with raising standards, are right. However, the school's action plans do not focus sharply enough on what should be improved in teaching in order to achieve the objectives. The teachers, therefore, believe that they are doing a good job and do not have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.

Governance is unsatisfactory, overall. They are supportive and visit the school to see lessons in action; however, they rely too much on the headteacher and staff for information and do not challenge the school enough to account for its low standards.

The school has made some improvement since the last inspection. It has tackled nearly all of the main issues satisfactorily, even though it has not succeeded in raising standards sufficiently. The staff share a common desire to improve and now understand much more clearly than before what needs to be done. The school is judged, therefore, to have the capacity to make the necessary further improvement.

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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?	2	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	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	4	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	3	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?	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	3	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	3	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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Bearpark Primary School

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25 November 2005

Dear children

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you and getting to know your school. I understand why you like being there.

I found a number of good things to say about your school.

You get on well together, you enjoy lessons and you are good at carrying out your jobs.

Your teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.

Your attendance has improved, you now have a good ICT room and library, and you now enjoy more exciting activities and visits.

The school takes good care of you and I understand why you feel safe at school.

However, I feel that your school could still improve.

Your standards in English, mathematics and science could be better.

I wish your school every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Inspector