



Belsay First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122184
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281181
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005
Reporting inspector Margaret Shepherd

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

Type of school	First	School address	Belsay
School category	Community		Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Tyne and Wear, NE20 0ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01661 881641
Number on roll	74	Fax number	01661 881641
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Charlotte Robson
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Christine Corbett

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 17 October 2005 - 18 October 2005	Inspection number 281181
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Belsay First School serves the local village and outlying areas. It is smaller than average and the organisation of the classes depends on the number of children in each year group. There are fewer than average children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or with English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year due to the small numbers, but is generally above average overall. There is a pre-school playgroup on the school site that is run separately from the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The school judges itself as good, but underestimates some of its outstanding features. Standards are higher than average by the end of Year 4. Children achieve consistently well throughout the school. They make a very good start in Reception due to the very good teaching and outstanding curriculum. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children have an extremely good understanding of health and safety issues. They describe their school as 'One big happy family'. Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Assessment systems are good, but opportunities are missed to use assessment for learning consistently during lessons. The curriculum is outstanding. Care and guidance are good with outstanding features. Arrangements for children to transfer between the playgroup and Reception are excellent, but arrangements for children to move between reception and Year 1 are not as strong. Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding. The school provides good value for money. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. There is a good capacity to improve because the whole school community is keen to make the provision even better.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment for learning more consistently during lessons.
- Create stronger links between the Reception and Year 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards and achievement are good and the school judged itself to be at this level. Standards are higher than average in Year 4. By the time the children leave school a much larger proportion than usual reaches levels that are not expected until the end of Year 6. The school sets itself, and individual children, challenging targets. Data shows that the educational value added between Years 2 and 4 has improved over the past three years and is now above the local authority average. Standards in Year 2 are also higher than expected. Standards in art and design are good. The great majority of children reach the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of Reception and a good proportion exceeds them.

Achievement is consistently good through the school. Standards vary each year because of the small size of each year group but, despite these variations, there is always a large group of children reaching standards that are higher than expected. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and tackle their work confidently. Children with English as an additional language achieve well and use their newly acquired vocabulary effectively to communicate their growing understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are excellent. The school underestimates the quality of these aspects of its work. Parents greatly appreciate this contribution to their children's learning.

Children thoroughly enjoy their work. They settle down quickly to do their best and they take a great pride in the presentation of their work. They feel proud to be a part of the whole school community and they believe that 'Belsay is best'. They have excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Older children are delighted to take responsibility for looking after younger children. They take these responsibilities very seriously. Children have an excellent understanding of citizenship through high quality projects. These include the simulation of a general election where candidates represented the major political parties, producing some radical policies such as raising taxes to provide more pocket money. Children work very effectively in teams to solve shared challenges, such as producing a monster with moving parts using pneumatics. Children have a very good understanding of the world of work and appreciate the range of options available to them. They have an excellent understanding of health and safety issues. Behaviour is good and children have a very good understanding of the rules. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Attendance levels are good. The school council plays an important role in the school; children expect to make decisions and recommendations that affect the daily working of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Classroom assistants play a valuable role in supporting individuals and groups. They work very effectively with teachers and have very good understanding of the learning expected for their groups. Teaching in Reception is of very good quality and the organisation of the classroom is outstanding. Teachers have a very good knowledge of each other's planning through the use of their shared preparation, planning and assessment time each week. Teachers plan carefully for the needs of the different age groups in their classes. They challenge more able children well and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language well. Teachers identify clearly what they expect the children to learn at the beginning of lessons, but miss opportunities to help them identify what they are learning during lessons. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to match teaching styles to the preferred learning styles of the children. They set clear and understandable targets every half term and their marking provides very effective indicators of how to improve. Staff have high expectations of handwriting, spelling and presentation: these were weaknesses at the previous inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This is outstanding. The school underestimates the quality of its provision. There is a very good balance within and between subjects. The curriculum for the Reception class is excellent and combines whole class, group and independent learning extremely well. The school provides an excellent range of visits out of school that children greatly appreciate. These visits extend their personal development extremely well and provide a very good basis for learning in school. Teachers use visitors and their expertise very effectively to extend learning. This is particularly good in art and design projects. Other initiatives, such as the development of the wildlife area, promote a great understanding of environmental issues.

The whole week and whole day curriculum projects provide excellent opportunities for children to make links between different subjects. The school provides a high quality personal, social, health, emotional and citizenship curriculum which is very carefully structured. There is a wealth of projects such as Adopt a School and a Global School Project. The school supplements its curriculum expertise extremely well by using specialist teachers in French, music and physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good, with many outstanding features. The school judges this aspect as good, but does not identify the outstanding features. There is a very high level of commitment from all staff to promote health and safety across the school and very good systems in place for safeguarding children. Teachers set regular and achievable targets for children and provide good levels of support to help reach them. The monitoring of children at risk is carefully undertaken and their well being is considered sensitively. The school works closely with parents to inform them of their children's progress. Parents are very appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. There are very good systems to ensure a smooth transfer between the playgroup and Reception with children starting very early in the autumn term to work in the Reception classroom. The transfer between Reception and Year 1 is not as effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall, which agrees with the school's self-evaluation. The leadership and management by the headteacher are outstanding. She manages the combination of running the Reception class and the school extremely well. She has a very clear strategy for making the school even better and is continually making improvements to the provision. New requirements are tackled extremely well. For example, the introduction of shared planning, preparation and assessment time are well ahead of schedule. Very good use is made of the small size of the school to set up effective communication systems. The headteacher puts a high priority on

personal development and raising standards and sets a very good example through her own teaching.

There are good self-evaluation systems in place, although they sometimes underestimate the quality of the provision. They ensure that the school tackles its weaknesses systematically and builds on its strengths. There is a very good quality programme of professional development linked to performance management. The school takes children's and parents' views into account when making decisions. The coordinators have a clear commitment to their roles and communicate very well with each other. They have regular opportunities to monitor each other's work and to check children's progress as they move through the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's work and have a great commitment to ensure it sustains its role as a hub of the community. The school considers its resources and budget carefully to ensure that it can maintain its staffing levels each year despite fluctuations in the number on roll. It provides good value for money.

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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?	1	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	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	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?	1	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?	2	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	2	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	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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Belsay First School

Belsay

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE20 0ET

19 October 2005

Dear children,

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

The best things about your school are:

the pride you have in your school

the way you work so hard and do your best to improve your standards

your cooperation when you work together in groups to solve problems

the relationships that you have with each other and the staff in your school

the way that the school council works

the careful way you present your work and get your spellings right

all the interesting visits and visitors that you enjoy so much

the special projects like your wildlife area and the exciting art work that you do

all the staff in your school who work so hard to look after you

the interesting lessons that your teachers organise

your great headteacher who knows you all so well

your governors who want the school to be an important part of the community.

One of the things that I have asked you school to do is to help you think about what you are learning in lessons and decide what you need to learn next. The other thing is for the school to make better links between your time in Reception and your time in Year 1.

Best wishes,

Maggi Shepherd

Lead Inspector

Annex B