



# Atkinson Road Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108445  
**Local Authority** Newcastle upon Tyne  
**Inspection number** 288101  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Geoffrey Cooper

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Atkinson Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		NE4 8XT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2730452
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	363	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2725192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Mavis Yorke
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mike Hunter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	12–13 October 2006	288101

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area where national and local data show a high degree of educational disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high, representing more than half the pupils in the school. This number continues to rise. The pupils with more complex learning difficulties include those who attend the Additionally Resourced Centres (ARCs) for language and communication difficulties and for autism. Recently the school has admitted a greater proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, most of whom are learning English as a new language. These pupils represent about a fifth of the pupil population. This complex picture is further added to by a relatively high degree of pupil mobility. Attainment on entry to school is 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

Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Inspectors disagree with the school's more positive view. Pupils say that they enjoy school and parents agree with their opinion. However, attendance is below average. Pupils are aware of the need to be safe and healthy, although some do not appreciate the school's encouragement to adopt a healthy diet. Pupils relish the many opportunities available to make a positive contribution to school life and to the wider community. Strong provision for personal and social development results in pupils' self-confidence, enthusiasm and good behaviour. They know their personal targets to help them to improve their work, but the progress towards their next stage of education is moderate.

Standards remain well below average. Given pupils' starting points, this represents satisfactory progress and achievement. There are examples of good achievement, particularly in the art displayed around the school. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress but, because of their low attainment on entry, few are on course to achieve the goals set for this age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Good provision in the Additionally Resourced Centres enables pupils to make good progress here. Pupils learning English as a new language make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. This is appreciated by their parents.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Consistent strengths in teaching lie in the good relationships between adults and pupils that produce good attitudes to learning. Pupils appreciate the marking of their work by teachers, which praises, encourages and gives guidance for improvement. However, the pace of learning is not intense and this leads to satisfactory progress. Curriculum strengths are in the provision for pupils' personal development and in their range of experiences. Pupils recalled enthusiastically what they have learned from recent visits out of school.

Recent initiatives have increased awareness of the need to raise standards, especially in English, and the school is modifying its curriculum to allow this. Effective links between subjects make learning more meaningful. The school's provision for the security and safeguarding of pupils is thorough, with a deep understanding of pupils' personal needs. Pupils know they are well cared for.

Leadership and management, including the role of governors, are satisfactory. Strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. Leaders and managers are strongly committed to the welfare and well-being of pupils. This commitment is respected by pupils and parents alike, who have great confidence in their school. Strategies for evaluating and moving the school forward provide a good framework for improvement. There has not been a strong enough focus on tracking pupils' progress and improving learning, but new systems are well placed to sharpen this. Therefore, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further, and provides satisfactory value for money.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the rate of progress to raise standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that information about progress is used rigorously to improve achievement.
- Improve attendance by making clear to parents the impact of absence on achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are well below the national average by the end of Year 6. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge well below that typically seen for children of this age. They make good gains in their attitudes to learning and in their social and emotional development. Nevertheless, when they enter Year 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are still well below those expected.

This pattern of satisfactory progress continues through the school and is reflected in the results of Year 2 and Year 6 national tests in 2005, which were well below the national average. Due to a range of new strategies, such as 'Narrative Intervention', standards in Key Stage 1 have begun to improve. This is reflected in the small increase in the number of pupils who attained the expected Level 2 in the Year 2 tests in 2006.

Although there is some evidence of improved standards in the current Key Stage 2, for example, those of more able Year 6 pupils, this is not yet reflected in the school's test results, which fell in 2006. Pupils learning English as a new language and those who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress. Those in the ARCs with quite profound learning difficulties make good progress. Girls perform more highly than boys, mainly because the majority of pupils with learning difficulties are boys.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are characteristic of the school. Pupils learn well from the example set by adults in the school. Pupils say they enjoy school and parents agree. However, for a minority, low attendance affects their achievement. Pupils are quick to talk about what the school does to ensure their safety and health, although some regret the lack of hamburgers and chips on the dinner menu.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils eagerly accept their many opportunities to be a positive influence on school life and the wider community, for example, through the school council, playground buddies, peer mediators and junior community wardens. They appreciate the role of the community policeman in supporting their personal development. While the school equips pupils well personally

and socially for the next stage of education, a deficit in their literacy and numeracy skills leaves them at some disadvantage.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Sensitive and supportive interaction between teachers and pupils, together with the setting of clear rules and routines, results in good behaviour. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies and involve pupils in interesting activities to encourage good attitudes to learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the complex learning needs of many of the pupils in their classes and, in the main, provide work that enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Pupils appreciate that work is well marked with helpful comments for improvement.

Whilst teachers have diligently tracked pupils' progress through the national curriculum programmes of study, not enough attention has been given to what pupils are capable of achieving. As a result, some pupils spend too much time consolidating knowledge. Others struggle with work which is too difficult. This slows their progress and helps to explain why standards are not higher.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, with significant strengths. It is broad and balanced, and responds to national and local initiatives in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. However, the curriculum has not been strongly focused on sharpening the rate at which pupils make progress. Many curriculum initiatives ensure that pupils learn from a wide variety of meaningful activities outside school and from a good range of visitors into school. Pupils appreciate the activities out of school hours, although some regret that more sport is not available to younger pupils. Sensible links across subjects make learning relevant. A major strength of the curriculum is its provision for personal and social development which encourages mature behaviour and sensible attitudes.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. School systems for health and safety and for safeguarding pupils are thorough and rigorous. Combined with the high level of sensitive care shown by staff and their understanding of pupils' needs, this makes the school a safe place for them. Therefore, it provides a good platform for learning. A comprehensive amount of information about attainment is collected. However, the way the information is analysed has not, until recently, highlighted pupils' pace of progress. As a result, the school has been only partially successful in raising standards

and improving achievement. Data are now being presented, analysed and used in a way that is well placed to change this.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is focused on raising standards and has introduced several recent changes to both the curriculum and the way in which pupils' progress is tracked. This has met with some success, and standards in Key Stage 1 showed some improvement in the 2006 tests. Through extensive monitoring and evaluation, the headteacher and senior staff have a clear view of the barriers to learning which most pupils face. They use this information well to provide targeted support with a positive impact on pupils' personal development and readiness to learn.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory – not better, because provision is not measured enough by outcomes. For example, teaching was considered good even though pupils do not make fast enough progress towards the academic standards of which some are capable. As a result, despite satisfactory progress by most pupils, standards remain well below the national average. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a clear view of the strengths of the school's provision in ensuring pupils' well-being. They do not yet sufficiently challenge the school with regard to the standards attained.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Atkinson Road Primary School

Atkinson Road

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE4 8XT

12 October 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching you hard at work and had some lively conversations with you.

In many ways your school is a really good place to be. The adults working with you know you very well and do so much to make sure you enjoy school and are safe and happy. This is partly the reason why you are so well behaved and sensible, although in the end, good behaviour and sensible attitudes come from inside you. You know a great deal about being safe and staying healthy. Your school meals are really good and the school advice about packed meals is very wise – even if you do like crisps and chocolate. You seem to learn a great deal from the visits you have from school. You are right to be proud of all the things you do to make your school run well: playground buddies, school councillors, mediators, junior community wardens, running the healthy fruit tuck shop, lunchtime helpers and library assistants. Your community policeman told us how well you listen to the talks he gives. Listening well is typical of your attitude in lessons. However, you need to learn rather faster and standards could be better. We have asked your school to keep an even closer eye on your work so that you can make faster progress. Some of you are not very good at coming to school regularly. That is a disappointment to your teachers and it means that some of you do not reach your best standard. You told us how important this is for your future but some of you still need to understand that fully.

We think the way you include everyone in all school activities is really good. It is especially important for the new children arriving from places overseas who do not speak English. You work well with them in class, helping and supporting them. Your displays about this show how much you are helping them. We have had letters from some of their parents saying how glad they are to be at Atkinson Road School.

Once again, thank you for your help, your friendly greetings and warm smiles. Your parents are very confident about your school. You can be proud of the part you play in it.

Geoff Cooper

Lead inspector