



Frederick Nattrass Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111653
Local Authority Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 289015
Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Darlington Lane
School category	Community		Norton, Stockton-on-Tees
Age range of pupils	3–11		TS20 1BZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 360528
Number on roll (school)	208	Fax number	01642 360516
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Elvis
		Headteacher	Mr Roy Canning
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006	Inspection number 289015
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves pupils from a very disadvantaged area of Stockton-on-Tees. Virtually all pupils are from White British families and the movement within the pupil population is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average.

The number of pupils has fallen dramatically in recent years mainly because of housing reorganisation. The shrinkage of the pupil numbers has had a major impact on staffing and management, and the excess capacity has prompted a rationalisation and refurbishment of the school's accommodation.

The school is part of a local authority action zone with particular support for standards, curriculum enrichment and leadership initiatives. It has received the Activemark for sport, Basic Skills and Healthy Schools Awards and an award for its work with Teesmouth Environment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Frederick Natrass Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has a safe and welcoming environment in which pupils feel valued, encouraged and happy to work. As a result, pupils develop well as individuals. Behaviour is good and pupils are increasingly adopting a good, healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise. They are considerate and play a satisfactory role in the school and wider community. Below average attendance and weaknesses in their basic skills limit their readiness for their life ahead.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are lower than those expected for children this age. They make good progress and reach broadly expected standards by the end of the Reception year. By Years 2 and 6, standards are below average in English and science and average in mathematics, in which they achieved well. Pupils do not develop good enough skills in speaking and listening and do not acquire a good enough vocabulary to raise standards in English. In science, pupils are not good enough at learning to carry out, for example, their own investigations efficiently and independently.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but mostly good in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and Years 5 and 6. In these classes, teaching is dynamic and challenging, so pupils respond keenly, understand new concepts well and make good progress. Elsewhere, teaching is often quite formal and some activities are mundane. Teachers do not routinely offer pupils an interesting enough curriculum to broaden their horizons and make learning more interesting and relevant. In addition, not all teachers are adept at using assessment data to match work to the individual needs of pupils, so progress is uneven as pupils move through the school.

While the pastoral care for pupils is good, advice and support for learning are less effective. Pupils have a suitable range of goals to aim for but these tend to be wide-ranging and long-term. They do not have specific, flexible and achievable learning targets to spur them on. Similarly, in their marking of pupils' work, teachers' comments are supportive but do not consistently and clearly show pupils how they can improve.

The headteacher provides firm leadership and has done well to manage the school through a difficult period following a sharp reduction in the number of pupils. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. It is aware of its strengths and most of its weaknesses, and provides reasonable action plans to improve its provision. The pace of improvement is satisfactory but patchy. For example, pupils' investigative skills remain a cause for concern. Management at all levels is adequate but not always incisive or decisive enough at ensuring robust change. Nevertheless, the school shows satisfactory capacity to improve and currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement in English and science.
- Improve guidance for pupils so that they know more precisely how to improve their work.

- Provide a more stimulating and diverse curriculum.
- Become more objective in monitoring the progress of the school, more specific in devising action plans and more rigorous in carrying them out.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is satisfactory. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are well below average, especially in language and mathematical development. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes and generally reach the goals expected of children of their age in all areas except language and mathematics. The school's recent analysis shows that these areas are improving and that children in 2006 reached all their goals.

By Year 2, standards have usually been close to average. In 2006, pupils did not do so well as in previous years and standards were lower in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress though was satisfactory given their individual starting points. Girls outperformed boys by some margin, although this picture is much less significant by Year 6.

Progress is satisfactory between Years 2 and 6, but better in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is more challenging. Standards by Year 6 are broadly average overall and showed some improvement in 2006, especially in mathematics, in which they achieved well. English overall results were similar to the significantly below average 2005 results, despite improvements in writing; pupils' reading comprehension suffers from a restricted vocabulary. Attainment in science is usually below average mainly because of weaknesses in investigative science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They greatly value the new TRACK system that recognises progress, not only in their work but also in their personal development. As a result, their attitudes to work and to other pupils are mostly good, and they are acquiring a sensible lifestyle through healthy eating and exercise. Pupils enjoy school but their attendance is consistently below average despite significant efforts by the school and external agencies to improve it.

Pupils are considerate and behave well for the most part. Behaviour only falters when lessons are not very interesting and restlessness creeps in. Older pupils make sure that other pupils who are alone are not alone for long. School councillors represent other pupils effectively and older pupils take on a range of tasks responsibly, such as managing the school library. Contributions to the local and wider communities are satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although the spiritual and cultural elements are not so strong as the others. Pupils have a reasonable

understanding of religions and different cultures, but their experiences are not extensive and the school does not provide enough regular opportunities for reflection. Their preparation for life ahead is satisfactory, not better, because of their insecure skills in English in particular.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies but is satisfactory overall. Teachers mostly have a good rapport with their pupils enabling them to relax, contribute readily and share their ideas. Teachers present new learning clearly, often using the interactive whiteboards well, so pupils understand concepts well, although this introductory part of the lesson is sometimes too brief.

Teaching is often good, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6, because teachers provide stimulating and challenging activities. They also strike a skilful balance between directing learning and allowing pupils to think for themselves. Consequently, pupils respond and learn well. Teaching assistants work well to support individual pupils, but are not quite so effective within lessons.

Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils, and so the pace of learning is satisfactory at best. Where this occurs, pupils' behaviour and concentration slacken. In addition, not all teachers systematically provide pupils with the scope to be independent in their learning, and so improve, for example, their speaking skills and in mathematics, their mental calculation skills. Marking is inconsistent and does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably broad, with a strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science. It follows guidelines that provide a clear structure to learning. Teachers extend the curricular diet by providing extra activities, such as a visit to Beamish to bring history alive. However, pupils' everyday experiences are less inspiring. Teachers often do not diversify learning enough, for instance, by linking subjects together. There are missed opportunities in English to improve factual writing or reading skills by using geographical topics, for example.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. Individual learning plans have targets but are not always challenging enough. Provision for pupils with special gifts or talents is, by the school's own admission, an area for development. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good because there is a healthy blend of directed and independent activities that are fun and motivate children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care for pupils is good and arrangements for their safeguarding are in place. Regular checks are made to keep the school a safe environment and correct procedures are followed, for example in vetting all the adults who have contact with pupils. The school's promotion of healthy eating has been recognised by a national award. Teachers in the Foundation Stage have a good range of resources available to enable parents to support their children at home.

There are adequate procedures to track pupils' progress over time. However, teachers do not use the information from these skilfully to set challenging, individual targets for pupils to focus upon in subsequent lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that strikes a good balance between pupils' academic achievement and personal development. He has steered the school sensitively through a difficult time of staff redeployment and, because of financial constraints, without the support of a deputy headteacher. The absence of this senior post places a heavy burden on the headteacher, for example in carrying out performance management of staff. Subject leaders have a satisfactory overview of their subjects, except in mathematics, where it is good.

Governance is satisfactory. Despite problems with recruitment, all governor vacancies have now been filled. Governors are supportive of the school but do not evaluate its progress with enough rigour. The number of parents' questionnaires returned was very low so it is difficult to gauge their general view of the school. However, those who replied were almost entirely positive.

The school is aware of most of its strengths and weaknesses. However, it is not clear enough about the underlying reasons for all areas of concern. Plans for improvement are relevant but often too broad and are not sufficiently linked to pupils' achievement. Occasionally, areas of concern do not feature clearly in the plans. As a result, the school's development in recent years has been patchy. Some aspects have improved since the last inspection, such as standards in mathematics but others, such as investigative skills in science, have remained similar. Overall, though, the school's improvement has been satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Frederick Nattrass Primary School

Darlington Lane

Norton

Stockton-on-Tees

TS20 1BZ

13 December 2006

Dear pupils

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Mr Watson and I enjoyed meeting you and all the adults at the school. Your contributions certainly helped us to get to know your school in a short time.

We believe that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Your standards have improved by Year 6, especially in mathematics, but standards in English and science are not as good as they should be. Your teachers make sure your learning is well organised and that classrooms are pleasant places to be. Teachers provide activities that you enjoy and that broaden your learning and that are challenging. However, not all lessons are interesting enough, and this is when you lose concentration and some interest in learning.

Your behaviour is good. You are kind to one another for the most part, you carry out your jobs well around school and the school council plays a valuable role. We know that you like school, even though your attendance is not good enough over the year. We are pleased that you are adopting a healthy lifestyle and take part happily in the clubs and activities after school and at lunch time.

Your headteacher makes sure that the school is a safe place. He has the right ideas to make the school better overall and intends make sure they happen. We know he is keen for you to improve your standards. Teachers can help you by making sure your targets are very clear and high enough, and we hope that you will rise to the challenge. We also think you would benefit from more interesting lessons to encourage you to succeed more and widen your learning.

I wish you every success for the future in your 'new' school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector