



Nettlesworth Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114005
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289775
Inspection dates 26–27 September 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Bardon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Front Street
School category	Community		Nettlesworth, Chester le Street
Age range of pupils	4–11		County Durham, DH2 3PF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3710444
Number on roll (school)	61	Fax number	0191 3710444
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sonia Duncan
		Headteacher	Mrs Leonora Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 26–27 September 2006	Inspection number 289775
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This village school serves a former mining area with below average economic and social characteristics. All pupils are from White British backgrounds and approaching a third are eligible for free school meals. In some years, children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but in others it is below. Quite often only about half of the children have attended Nursery or play-group. About one in five pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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. Pupils receive a stimulating and enjoyable education in a welcoming environment and they achieve well. The school has improved substantially since it was last inspected and provides good value for money. Standards have risen and are above average. This is evident in both the work pupils do in class and in the consistently good results that both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain in the national tests. Teaching is good; lessons are lively and interesting and pupils are keen to learn. As a result, throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils make good progress and leave at the end of Year 6 well equipped for secondary education. Children's progress in Reception is satisfactory and by the time they move into Year 1 most are working within the targets for their age. Provision in Reception is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection, but pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to learn outdoors and, while the teaching is also satisfactory, there are times when it lacks creativity. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well judged support which helps them to play a full part in lessons and to make good progress. Particularly close attention is paid to those with a statement of special educational need and the inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of learning is an outstanding feature of the school.

The pleasure pupils get from learning is clear from their readiness to smile and the convivial way they interact with their teachers and each other. Adults are sensitive to pupils' individual needs, helping to create a strong family atmosphere which encourages all who work or learn at the school to do their best. Pupils get on well and take the responsibilities they are given very seriously. Their behaviour is good, although a minority need periodic reminders of what the school expects. Attendance is below average because a small number of pupils do not attend as often as they could. Through the opportunities the school provides, pupils acquire a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. The comprehensive and well planned curriculum prepares pupils well for what lies ahead and they acquire many useful skills. The school uses its strong links with outside organisations to the benefit of both pupils and parents. Procedures are in place to safeguard pupils and they feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they are looked after and cared for extremely well. Pupils value their own culture but have little understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain.

As one parent wrote, 'Nettlesworth is a happy, well organised school'. The headteacher leads the school with purpose and vision. Since the last inspection she has installed a range of effective management procedures which have been central to the school's improvement. These have enabled staff to focus on what is important to pupils' learning, resulting in much better achievement and higher standards. Subject leaders manage their subjects well but are not fully involved in developmental planning. Despite the school's healthy position there is no sense of complacency. Plans to build on the school's successes are firmly in place and its capacity for further improvement is good. Governors play an active part in the life of the school and carry out their responsibilities well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the progress children make in Reception by improving provision for learning outdoors and ensuring that teaching is more creative and lively.
- Help pupils to develop a full understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain and their place within it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average. Although often quite mixed, in general terms the attainment of the children when they first start school is typical for their age. Children's achievement in Reception is satisfactory, although limited opportunities to learn out of doors adversely affects their progress in all areas of learning. By the end of their time in Reception children have settled to school and the majority are working within the targets for their age. Pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 is good. For a number of years, the school's results in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have been above average, and at times well above average. Challenging targets for pupils' performance in the tests have regularly been set and attained. Although the results for 2006 have still to be verified, there is every indication that this very positive pattern has continued and that, individually, pupils have made good progress. Both boys and girls are motivated to learn and throughout the school they achieve equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, receive well judged support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They clearly enjoy school with one group of younger pupils unanimous in their opinion that it was 'better than nice'. Pupils of all ages are aware of how to keep themselves safe and say that they feel secure and well cared for in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They grow in confidence, develop a strong understanding of right and wrong and become sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They appreciate and value the culture of the local area and know a little about cultures in other parts of the world. However, their appreciation of the multicultural nature of modern Britain is weak and they have insufficient understanding of how people outside of their own community live and worship. Most pupils attend regularly and arrive punctually but, despite the school's best efforts, a small number are regularly absent for relatively minor reasons. In a school of this size this has a marked effect on attendance figures. The school provides pupils with many opportunities for healthy living and by Year 6 they have developed a detailed understanding of the importance and requirements of a healthy lifestyle. As they move through the school, pupils acquire a wide range of interpersonal, practical and academic skills which they will find of considerable value in their future education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Improvements since the last inspection are reflected in pupils' increased achievement and higher standards. Teaching strikes a productive balance between instruction, discussion and practical tasks and lessons move smoothly from one element to the next. The work they are set stimulates pupils' interest and challenges them to think for themselves. In response, most pupils listen attentively and try hard to meet the clear lesson targets teachers set. A minority have difficulty concentrating for long periods but teachers' reminders quickly bring them back on task. On a few occasions the pace of the lesson is not matched well to the task in hand, adversely affecting pupils' learning. Opportunities to develop interesting points are then missed. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and regular assessments enable teachers to set work that is matched closely to the needs of the individual. This is particularly important for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who receive well planned learning opportunities from teachers and learning assistants. As a result of this good provision all pupils have equal opportunities to learn. The teaching in Reception is satisfactory but at times lacks the creativity needed to engage the children fully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It takes full account of the mix of ages in each class and pays close attention to local issues. Initiatives, such as the recently introduced social and emotional learning programme, ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. All the required subjects are covered with some pupils studying French to give them an early taste of a modern foreign language. By minimising repetition, teachers keep the curriculum fresh and lively. The curriculum is suitably modified for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, promoting their active participation in lessons and other activities. A good range of extra-curricular and other activities enrich the curriculum. These are very popular and much enjoyed by the pupils. The curriculum for Reception children is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection but the outside area is underdeveloped, limiting substantially the activities that can be provided outdoors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, support and guidance that pupils receive is outstanding. Care provision is built on very strong relationships. Staff know pupils extremely well, and respond quickly and sensitively to their needs. Pupils are happy in the knowledge that if they have a worry or concern there is always someone to go to who will listen and help. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting children, which meet current

government requirements, are in place. The headteacher attends child protection training regularly and keeps staff fully up-to-date. Pupils' progress is assessed and tracked closely and they are set well considered individual targets relating to both their academic and personal development. Teachers involve pupils fully in evaluating how well they are doing and take time to explain things to them in detail. Through their marking of pupils' work and the guidance they give verbally, teachers help pupils to celebrate their successes and to recognise how they can improve their work further. The close support and guidance pupils with a statement of special educational need receive from teachers and learning assistants help them to enjoy school and to learn well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a high standard, leading the school with vision and purpose. The school is forward thinking and has made good improvement since it was last inspected. Standards have risen and almost all the issues from the last inspection have been addressed thoroughly, although further development is needed in Reception. Procedures for checking the quality of teaching in lessons and how well the school is performing are thorough and effective. They provide staff and governors with a clear and detailed picture and enable them to plan accurately for the next stages of the school's development. The size of the school means that all teachers have to take on several management roles. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and the school runs smoothly. The management of subjects and major aspects, such as special educational needs, is good, but the contribution subject leaders make to forward planning is limited. Parents' opinions of the school are very positive but they do not have regular opportunities to contribute their views to its development. Governors give good support to the school and look carefully at the provision it is making for pupils' education. Finances are managed well and the school makes good use of the funding it receives.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

The Pupils

Nettlesworth Primary School

Front Street

Nettlesworth

Chester le Street

County Durham

DH2 3PF

27 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. Although I was with you for only two days, I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about all the interesting things you do, and special thanks to those who talked with me about the school.

Nettlesworth is a good school. There have been lots of improvements since the school was last inspected in 2002 and I can see why you enjoy it so much. I am sure teachers will be amused to hear that you think they are funny, but this shows me just how well everyone gets on. I was pleased to see that, despite the fun you were having, when you got into lessons you knew you are there to work. I was impressed with the quality of work you do and with the good progress everyone makes. This is because the teaching is good and you try hard in lessons. Most of you behave well and, with one or two exceptions, attend school regularly. It is nice that you feel safe and well cared for in school. I think the way that adults look after you is outstanding and I was particularly pleased that you feel that there is always someone you can turn to if you are worried or upset.

When talking to the teachers I pointed out a few things that I felt would help the school to get even better.

- Reception children need to be able to work outside more often than they do now and to have activities that are a little livelier at times.
- It is important that you have more opportunities to find out how people from different backgrounds live their lives. When the school provides these activities and experiences you can help by carefully considering what life is like for other people and what we can learn from each other.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon

(Lead Inspector)