



Burnhope Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114041
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289789
Inspection dates 2–3 November 2006
Reporting inspector Geoffrey Cooper

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Langley Avenue
School category	Community		Burnhope, Durham
Age range of pupils	3–11		County Durham, DH7 0AG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01207 520243
Number on roll (school)	71	Fax number	01207 520243
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Allan Heslop
		Headteacher	Mr David Collingwood
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 2–3 November 2006	Inspection number 289789
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school serves a rural area that has some social and economic disadvantage. This is reflected in the high level of pupils entitled to a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need (for more profound learning difficulties). All pupils come from white European backgrounds with a very small number from Traveller origins. The building is being redeveloped and, as a result, the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) outdoor curriculum is limited. Attainment on entry is well below expectations, particularly in early language and communication skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school that it is good. The school has made very good improvement since its previous inspection. It continues to be ambitious and is well placed to improve further. It has the reputation locally of 'being at the hub of the village'. This is well deserved; particularly in the way it prepares its pupils for their future role in the community and in the opportunities given for the community to be part of the school. The school works extremely well with others, such as parents, other schools, outside agencies and with the community.

School data show children start school with few educational advantages. Strengths in school provision, such as good teaching and learning, the strong curriculum and effective support and guidance have promoted much better attitudes and behaviour and very significant improvements in standards by the end of Year 6. Although many children have not achieved the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1, they make good progress because they are well taught in the Foundation Stage. Despite good teaching and good progress, standards have declined recently by the end of Year 2, mainly because of a decline in attainment on entry. Standards are about average by the time pupils enter Year 3. Good teaching and progress continue through the four years of Key Stage 2 and by the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are above average. This is the evidence of recent national tests, including very successful tests in 2006; the school's tracking of current progress, and work seen during the inspection.

The school is skilled at modifying the curriculum so that it is stimulating and motivating to the very wide spread of ability and different ages of pupils in the same class. Consequently, pupils are very positive about their learning and explain how much they enjoy their lessons. This spirit is captured in the comment of one parent, who wrote, 'The staff are brilliant; my child is coming on leaps and bounds'. Pupils rightly recognise that their good academic and social skills prepare them well for their future social and economic well-being. One pupil, finding his reading difficult, said, 'This learning is hard but you need to get on so you can do your grown up job well'. Pupils know how to stay safe and welcome the security school brings them. They appreciate the messages they get about a healthy diet and participate enthusiastically in all the physical activities provided. Pupils contribute fully to the school and wider community, especially in their participation in the school council.

It is no accident that provision and outcomes are strong. Leaders and managers are effective and this is correctly recognised by parents and governors. Self-evaluation is very accurate and the school knows itself well. As a result, the school is rightly confident about its strengths and works hard to bring about improvement. It is disappointed that despite strong teaching, standards have slipped in Key Stage 1. It is frustrated that otherwise good provision in the Foundation Stage is hampered in the outdoor curriculum by a stalled building programme. The unsatisfactory attendance of a minority of pupils is an on-going concern that the school is doing a great deal to improve. Although parents are very supportive of the work of the school and confident in its provision, some families do not regard good attendance as a priority.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Key Stage 1.
- Improve attendance.
- Work towards the development of the outdoor curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Given well below average attainment on entry to school, this represents very good progress over time. Pupils achieve well. From their low beginning, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, although many do not achieve the expected goals as they enter Year 1. Standards in national tests for seven-year-olds have fallen over the past four years and are now about average. This is largely a reflection of a decline in attainment on entry. In the work seen during the inspection, standards fully reflect the outcomes of national tests. Since the previous inspection, very good improvement has been made in Key Stage 2. While standards are lower in Key Stage 1, school tracking shows that these pupils make good progress. Progress is also good for the more able pupils, which is an improvement on recent national test results. Good support ensures that pupils with particular barriers to learning make good progress. Pupils who come from different backgrounds progress well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. Attitudes and behaviour are good throughout the school. Pupils show pride in their work, although occasionally presentation does not live up to pupils' good ideas and accuracy of answers. Attendance has been below average recently. The most recent report to the governing body shows it fell further last term. From a low beginning, the personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory because they are well taught. This is successfully built upon in the rest of the school, ensuring pupils enjoy lessons and are eager learners. Pupils have a secure understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they know how to stay safe. Pupils welcome the good opportunities to make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. Good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills and very positive attitudes to learning are a secure foundation for the next stage of learning and for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved since the previous inspection. This has brought about better progress and achievement. Lessons typically have clear objectives, positive but firm relationships and good pace and purpose. Good use is made of available support from additional adults in the classroom. Tasks are well matched to the wide range of pupils' ability. Occasionally, worksheets do not give pupils the opportunity to fully demonstrate their potential. Challenging questioning provides for good assessment during lessons. Work is generally well marked with helpful comments for future progress, although sometimes pupils' endeavour is recognised only by a tick without any comment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum responds well to local needs. Planning is successful despite the complexities created by very small year groups and a very wide range of ability. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the acquisition and development of basic skills. French has been introduced and ample time is provided for physical and healthy activities. A broad range of enrichment activities includes a wide range of visits and visitors. Activities out of school hours include clubs for younger pupils as well as a good deal of sport for older ones. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of learning skills. The school's programme for social and health education is well developed. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, but the curriculum is limited by a delayed building programme. As a result, children are unable to access the outdoor curriculum because the outdoor area is unfinished.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive exemplary care and support because staff know them so well. School provision for safeguarding pupils meets requirements. Good support is given to those pupils who find learning difficult and those who come from different backgrounds. An extensive range of tests and assessments, including national and voluntary tests, give staff a clear idea of the progress pupils are making. This data is complex. The school is currently working on ways to make the data even more useful by using computer technology. Despite extensive strategies for encouraging good attendance, the school is disappointed that a significant minority of pupils are not regular attenders. This has a negative impact on the attainment of some individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher gives a strong sense of direction. They are well supported by dedicated staff and morale is high. This ensures good teaching in a well managed, safe, clean and stimulating environment. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Challenging priorities for whole school development and clear targets for pupils' achievement are set. Most recently, academic targets have been achieved and exceeded, but strategies for improving attendance have not been successful. The school does well to ensure equality of opportunity for pupils to progress and succeed. The school provides good value for money because effective financial management promotes successful provision and good outcomes for pupils. Governance is good. Governors have a very clear idea of school successes and aspirations. They are well placed to support and challenge it in seeking further improvement.

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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?	1
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	2
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?	2

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	2
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

Burnhope Primary School

Langley Avenue

Burnhope

Durham

County Durham

DH7 0AG

2 November 2006

Dear Children

I enjoyed my visit to your school very much. Thank you for all the kindness and help I was given. Parents, governors and you told me how good your school is and I agree with what people are saying. It is a good place for you to learn and develop.

Your school has improved a great deal since its previous inspection. Your standards and progress are better. Your behaviour is better and this helps to make you good learners. You are well taught and enjoy interesting lessons. Your school takes really good care of you and watches your progress carefully. Taking all these things together, that means your school is well led and managed so that you have good opportunities to learn.

Standards in your school could be even better if everyone attended school regularly. Most of you do come to school regularly and on time. Some children miss too many lessons and this affects how well they do. Although your school does a lot to try to improve attendance, this has not worked very well yet and you can do something to help make it better. While standards have improved for older boys and girls, younger children's standards have fallen recently, despite good teaching and good progress. Your school has been asked to keep a close eye on this and to try to make their standards better. Your school is very disappointed that the new building has not been finished and children in the Reception and Nursery class cannot go outside for some of their lessons. This is an important part of learning for children at their age. Your school will try to get this building project moving again.

Thank you for all your cheerful chats, for your good manners and sense of humour. It was very good to have the chance to visit you.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Cooper

Lead inspector