



# Benfieldside Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114045  
**Local Authority** Durham  
**Inspection number** 289790  
**Inspection dates** 14–15 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Gillian Salter-Smith

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Moorlands
<b>School category</b>	Community		Blackhill, Consett
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		County Durham, DH8 0JX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 591369
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	289	<b>Fax number</b>	01207 591378
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Karen Brierley
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Kerry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	14–15 September 2006	289790

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Many pupils come from areas of high social and economic deprivation. Above average numbers have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. There are no pupils from Traveller families or who are looked after by adults other than their parents, though there have been in recent years. High numbers of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the usual start. The school often loses pupils at the end of Nursery to other schools in the area where there is no Nursery provision. More leave at the end of Year 3. These are often higher attaining pupils who transfer to middle schools in a nearby local authority. Children enter the school in the Nursery with well below average skills in communication, literacy and language and personal, social and emotional development.

## **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 enjoy attending and they make good progress because they are well taught, cared for and supported. Parents value the work of the school. They appreciate the warm, friendly atmosphere and the determination of all staff to work together in the best interests of their children.

From the time they start, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour is very good. Pupils make an active contribution to their own community through the work of the school council. Their enjoyment of learning and their involvement in the local community prepare them well for the future. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and balanced diets and the school's work in this area has been recognised through the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils show trust in staff and feel safe and secure. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are especially well supported by teachers and their assistants who provide well targeted personal and academic support. There are good systems to keep a check on the progress of all pupils.

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. The Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Nursery with well below average learning and personal skills. They settle quickly into the life and routines of school and develop very good relationships with staff and each other. They enjoy the well planned activities that help them to learn through play and discovery indoors and out. Children make good progress, especially in their personal development. By the end of Reception, standards are below the level expected for their age, more so with boys than girls. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 because they are well taught and there is a good focus on improving basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

Pupils who remain in school from Year 3 through to Year 6 continue to make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. A significant number of pupils join the school mid way or late on in Key Stage 2. Many have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress because they are very well supported personally and in their schoolwork. However, their lower attainment lowers the school's overall results. This explains the below average Key Stage 2 results in 2004 and 2005. Girls attain higher standards than boys; mathematics standards are lower than English and fewer than average pupils reach higher levels. The recent focus for improvement in English and helping more boys attain higher standards resulted in improved results in 2006. These improvements were brought about by good leadership and management, which are strongly focused on raising standards, and rigorous self-evaluation that leads to effective action.

Good and occasionally outstanding teaching helps pupils to achieve well. Frequent, accurate assessment of pupils' progress helps teachers to plan learning that matches most pupils' needs. Pupils' work is always marked but opportunities are missed to show pupils how they could improve their work. In a small number of lessons, more able pupils are not fully challenged, activities do not capture pupils' imagination and the pace of learning slows down.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the number of pupils reaching above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2, especially for boys, and in mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers' marking gives pupils detailed guidance on how to improve their work in all subjects, but especially so in mathematics.
- Ensure that all lessons include stimulating and challenging activities, that help all pupils, including the more able, to learn at a good pace.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are broadly average. Children make good progress because they are well taught, cared for and supported. Children start the Foundation Stage with skills that are well below average. At the end of Nursery, many of the more able children transfer to other schools. By the end of Reception, standards are below average. Standards are lower for boys than girls and above average numbers of children are not fully meeting the nationally expected goals in communication, language and literacy.

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 because they are well taught. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, though the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics is below average. Though making equally good progress, boys' standards remain lower than girls.

National test results indicate that standards by the end of Year 6 for pupils who have been in school since the Foundation Stage are broadly average; but below average for those pupils who arrive mid-Key Stage 2 or later. Standards attained by all pupils in 2006 are higher than in the previous years. Pupils make good progress in their time in Key Stage 2. This is especially so in English where targets were exceeded. Girls attain higher standards than boys.

Records show that all different groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because the school keeps a close check on their progress and teachers and teaching assistants provide well-targeted activities that help them to succeed and develop confidence.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The school council makes a real difference to school life and has been instrumental, for example, in establishing a very effective 'buddy scheme', which is of special comfort to newcomers and younger children. Pupils have demonstrated their awareness of safety by getting the school to install new mixer valves to regulate water temperature in taps. Year 6 pupils have taken responsibility

for switching off lights when rooms are not in use, reducing the school's energy bill significantly and benefiting the environment. Pupils are happy in school and particularly enjoy activities such as fund raising for charities and events to entertain elderly people in the local community. Attendance is satisfactory and the school has good systems in place to monitor and improve it. Behaviour is very good. Rare instances of bullying are taken seriously and sorted out quickly to the satisfaction of pupils and most parents.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Warm and supportive relationships help pupils to gain in confidence and self-esteem. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. They praise pupils when they deserve it, helping to reinforce pupils' positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour in class. Teachers' good planning ensures that pupils make progress through manageable steps. Teachers use computers and electronic whiteboards effectively to motivate pupils to want to learn. Pupils know what they need to achieve in each lesson and increasingly they recognise when they have succeeded. Clear targets in individual educational learning plans help teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities successfully. An outstanding music lesson was characterised by highly challenging activities that the pupils relished and teaching assistants worked alongside the teacher to help all pupils to succeed. A small amount of teaching lacks pace and stimulation and, in a few lessons, there is not enough challenge for the most able pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets pupils' different needs well. The successful introduction of more practical activities into lessons is improving boys' interest in learning. Specially adapted activities for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully considered and help these pupils to make good progress. Visits and visitors frequently enrich learning. An African drumming session and visits by students from China have added considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school. Residential visits and regular activities which require older pupils to learn to fend for themselves, and work in teams, have boosted pupils' confidence and independence. A good range of out-of-school activities is aimed mainly at pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school is planning to provide more activities for younger pupils through the Children's Centre, the Extended Schools initiative and the Sports Partnership.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Classrooms are safe, attractive and welcoming. Thorough assessment gives teachers a good understanding of pupils' abilities and

enables them to set realistic targets against which progress can be accurately measured. The marking of pupils' work sometimes misses opportunities for giving pupils better guidance on how to improve. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils' individual learning needs. Relationships are very supportive and staff often praise pupils, helping them to feel valued and secure. Good communication with parents ensures that pupils are well supported in their learning. Careful attention is paid to health and safety. Procedures for child protection and to safeguard pupils are in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. As a result, pupils achieve well and standards have risen amongst pupils who have received all of their education at Benfieldside since the previous inspection. Improvement through thorough self-evaluation is well established. Leaders, managers and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because senior staff and subject leaders accurately analyse pupils' performance, check written work and observe learning in order to identify areas for improvement. Well-focused planning for improvement and astute budgeting ensure that appropriate action is taken and resources are available to bring about improvements. In recent years, the need to improve boys' progress in English and to improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils were recognised and acted upon successfully so that 2006 Key Stage 2 results in English and for boys and higher attaining pupils were considerably improved on the previous year.

Governors are supportive yet challenging. They are aware of the need to develop more direct involvement in checking on the work of the school. The thorough approach to self-evaluation and the commitment to improve among all staff means the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	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	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<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>	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

Benfieldside Primary School

Moorlands

Blackhill

Consett

County Durham

DH8 0JX

16 September 2006

Dear Pupils

You will know that a small team of inspectors visited your school recently. We would like to thank you all for your friendliness and warm welcome. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you. We came to find out how well you are doing and how the staff are helping you to do your best. It is important that you know what we found out and what we have reported to your parents.

You have a good school. Your teachers and other staff take good care of you. They teach you well and help you to succeed in your schoolwork. You behave very well in lessons and on the playground. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and the 'buddy scheme', started up by the school council, works very well. It was good to see older pupils taking care of the younger pupils. We were impressed by the efforts that older pupils have taken to reduce the energy costs of the school by suggesting mixer taps in the toilets and switching off electric lights frequently. You are taking a very active role in improving your own community. Many of you move in and out of Benfieldside, sometimes not staying very long. Your teachers, other staff and the rest of the children do a good job in helping you to settle in quickly and do as well as you can.

We found a small number of areas that could be improved. It was clear that some of you did not find a few lessons very interesting and, as a result, you were not as keen to learn as usual. Sometimes the work in lessons was not hard enough for all of you. We would like your mathematics results to show improvement next year and to see a few more of you getting those elusive Level 5s. It is no surprise that your headteacher and other senior leaders already know about these and have started work on making improvements.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of your time in school and go on to do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

(Lead inspector)