



# Consett Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 114051  
**Local Authority** Durham  
**Inspection number** 289793  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sheila Mawer

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>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Beechdale Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Consett, County Durham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		DH8 6AY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 504431
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	193	<b>Fax number</b>	01207 504431
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ed Parker
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Yates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves a built up area of mixed housing. Below average numbers take free school meals and a similar proportion have learning difficulties and disabilities. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The school has gained many awards, including Healthy School status, Artsmark Gold and Sports Activemark. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, they have a range of skills that are broadly average. The deputy headteacher is currently leading the school in the absence of the headteacher.

## 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 that achieves well and excels in its care, support and guidance of pupils. Consistently above average and, at times, well above standards have been maintained over several years. In 2006, pupils in Year 6 performed very well in English, but the school's results in science and mathematics were lower than previous years. From its rigorous tracking of progress, the school identified the underperformance of a group of boys of average ability who should have done better. It has quickly put in place effective measures to enable the school to resume its trend of good standards and strong progress for all groups of pupils and this underachievement is no longer an issue.

Teaching is good and, when linked with the wide-ranging curriculum, it is successful in helping pupils to learn well. Challenging tasks are set that are well matched to pupils' needs. The outstanding playing of the brass band and pupils' imaginative writing demonstrates teachers' high expectations. While pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, few use a joined script in their writing. Although the questioning skills of staff are good, there is a tendency to move on too quickly during discussions, without giving pupils enough thinking time to consolidate their learning or share ideas with others. This particularly applies to problem-solving in mathematics and investigations in science. Although literacy skills are used well across the curriculum, fewer opportunities are made to extend mathematical skills, particularly in science and design and technology. The school is working on ways to improve these weaknesses.

Most parents appreciate the good quality of education provided for their children. One summarised the views of many when writing, 'My child has grown into a happy, bright and confident individual with a very firm foundation of learning.' All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued in the high quality of care, guidance and support. Accurate assessment means that teachers know their pupils well. In very positive relationships, pupils enjoy school and by the end of Year 6 they are confident learners, with thoughtful and caring attitudes for one another. Effective partnerships with other schools, with parents and the community all support the school's good provision.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very successful leaders who have united the staff in looking for ways to make things even better for its pupils. These priorities are clearly set out in the school's accurate self-evaluation. They aim to create a happy, secure environment where 'Every Child Matters' is clearly embedded in the school. Governors for example have used funds very wisely in recent times to improve the kitchen facilities so that healthy meals can be provided. The cloakrooms and toilets have been refurbished to ensure that the health and safety of all pupils receives a high priority. The school is very well placed to continue to improve and gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities in mathematics and science for pupils to develop their thinking skills in problem-solving and investigations.

- Identify and extend the skills of mathematics in other subjects so that pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Enable more pupils to use a fluent joined script in their writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. In tests in 2006, results were well above average in English, just above average in science and broadly average in mathematics. Results showed that girls performed better than boys. This is not a normal trend through the school. While higher attaining boys and those with learning difficulties and disabilities made good progress, boys of average abilities did less well than other groups. The school has carefully evaluated why this group missed the targets set for them, particularly in mathematics and science. Several boys took extended holidays in 2006 and some were reluctant to complete homework or attend 'booster' classes after school and this slowed their progress. The school has taken effective measures to address any potential underachievement of current pupils, through additional support in school time, closer links with parents to ensure that homework is done and selecting texts in literacy that appeal to boys as much as girls. Reliable school data indicate that these initiatives are having a positive impact on the progress and standards of all pupils in the school and especially boys of average ability. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet the challenging targets set for them in 2007. Standards in music are very high due to the inspirational teaching of the subject leader and the opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument from Year 3.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are proud to be part of the school community and are confident and well behaved. They enjoy school and respond well to the wealth of opportunities available. Their keenness to learn has a positive effect on their good progress. Attendance, which was below average in 2005, is now broadly average. The school does all it can to reduce the numbers of parents who withdraw their children during term time for annual holidays. Good progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in pupils' respect and care for others and very few incidents of bullying, which are dealt with effectively. Strengths in music and art play an important part in pupils' spiritual awareness and in their good understanding of different cultures. Awards for being a healthy and active school are fully justified in pupils' keen awareness of how to keep safe, healthy and fit and through their high participation in clubs and sporting activities.

Pupils contribute to school life and the local community enthusiastically and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They leave school with good basic skills and the ability to work well independently. They know their views are sought and valued, both in lessons and through the school council. Although the school council manage their own budget, they have less responsibility in planning and running the

meetings. Older pupils appreciate that they are trusted by staff to take responsibilities around the school and at an adjoining nursery. They act as 'buddies' for younger members of school and as 'mediators' to support pupils who have problems.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Good teaching helps pupils to enjoy their lessons and make good progress. Teachers plan thoroughly, making good use of the school's rigorous assessment information to make sure that work is at the right level for all pupils. Teaching assistants successfully help those who need extra support. New ideas are explained clearly in lessons and often with technology to make the learning more meaningful. Underpinning the effective teaching are strong and constructive relationships. Pupils value highly the support they get from staff, saying 'they explain things in small steps, so we understand'. The careful marking of pupils' work with developmental comments gives them good guidance on how to improve. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour except in handwriting where they are not encouraged enough to use a joined script and too many pupils by Year 6 are still printing. Most teachers use questions well to challenge pupils in their learning and maintain a brisk pace in lessons. Sometimes pupils are not given enough thinking time during discussions or in the independent tasks to help them consolidate their learning. There are fewer opportunities for them to share ideas with others or discuss different strategies, such as how to work out problems in mathematics or draw conclusions in science.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is stimulating and provides pupils with a well-balanced range of learning opportunities. The close attention to the basic skills as well as enrichment activities is a strong factor in the good progress pupils make and their enjoyment of school. Work is often planned across subjects to make the learning more meaningful. Information and communication technology (ICT) in particular is used well to develop the research skills of pupils. Fewer opportunities are provided to use mathematics, particularly in science and design and technology. Visits, visitors and special events make a good contribution to the enhancement of the curriculum. Specialist teachers and visitors help with music, science and many sports. Over a third of pupils are learning a musical instrument. Authors and poets bring a new dimension to literacy and artists and musicians from different countries widen pupils' understanding of the world. The curriculum for personal, social and health issues is comprehensive and supports pupils' personal development well.

There is an extensive range of clubs after school, which includes chess as well as a good range of sports. The residential outdoor education trip for older pupils is particularly popular, supporting physical and social skills. Pupils told the inspector that

as well as learning the skills of canoeing they learnt the importance of teamwork. The school curriculum places great emphasis on teaching pupils how to live as well as learn. When pupils in Year 6 were questioned about how well prepared they were for their next school, they said they had learnt the skills of caring for one another and this would help them to be happy and make friends in their next school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of pastoral care is excellent. This is because everyone in the school community is respected as an individual within a strong and supportive environment. Everything is done to keep pupils safe. Thorough checks are made on adults who work in the school, risk assessments are rigorously carried out and appropriate child protection procedures are in place. Effective links with external agencies enable the staff to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Pupils receive very good guidance on how well they are doing in their personal and academic development. There are rigorous systems to track the progress pupils make and to identify those who require more support. Pupils are involved in setting and reviewing their own targets and receive helpful feedback from their teachers on how to improve their work. This supports their learning effectively. Parents are well informed of their children's progress in meeting the targets and this helps to enhance their personal development and achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The sustained and committed leadership of the headteacher has created a positive climate of successful learning and good achievement over many years. His considerable expertise in school leadership has been used to very good effect in other local schools, as well as ensuring the deputy headteacher is well placed to lead the school in his absence. Through valuing and supporting the staff so successfully, the two leaders have built a strong and effective team who have made good improvements since the last inspection. Subject leaders have become more involved in monitoring the teaching and learning and given clear indications of where teaching could be improved in order to raise standards.

The school knows itself well. Self-evaluation is strong and thorough in recognising strengths and highlighting areas that need to be improved. The school development plan is keenly focused on meeting the needs of each individual pupil and the outstanding provision in care, support and guidance goes a long way to achieving the school's aims in its mission statement. Governors provide effective support and challenge. They are actively involved in the life and work of the school and discharge their duties well, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and striving to make it better.

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## 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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	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

<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	2
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>	1

<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

Consett Junior School

Beechdale Road

Consett

County Durham

DH8 6AY

19 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for being so helpful when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you, visiting you in lessons and looking at your work. I think you go to a good school and you play a big part in making it such a happy place.

Here are the things I think are best about you school:

- the outstanding care, guidance and support that you receive from all the staff
- the excellent opportunities you have to play musical instruments and reach high standards
- you do well in your work because you are well taught
- you are keen to learn and to take on more responsibility in school
- you get on well with each other and are growing up into confident young people and know how to keep healthy and safe
- the curriculum is exciting and helps to make the learning fun
- your headteacher, the acting headteacher, staff and governors are doing a really good job.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be better. I think you need to have more time to think hard in lessons when you are doing problem-solving in mathematics or investigations in science. I also think that you could have more opportunities to use your mathematical skills, like measuring or drawing graphs in other subjects. I would like all of you and particularly the older pupils to try to use a joined script in your writing, rather than printing. This will help you to write more quickly and fluently.

With best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Mawer

Lead Inspector