

Hesleden Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 114143 |
| Local Authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 289816 |
| Inspection date | 20 March 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Andrew Scott |

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

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 154 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Jeff Gray |
| Headteacher | Mrs Frances Wrightson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 February 2002 |
| School address | Hesleden Nr Hartlepool TS27 4PT |
| Telephone number | 01429 836376 |
| Fax number | 01429 835976 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a village and surrounding area where socio-economic conditions are below average. The pupil population is relatively stable and comes almost entirely from White British families. There is a reasonably high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is popular and is oversubscribed for the coming year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hesleden Primary is a good school; successful in promoting academic achievement alongside personal development. Pupils prosper because they develop good learning skills and become responsible, sociable and considerate individuals. They enjoy school and appreciate its friendliness, the interesting work and warm atmosphere. Staff certainly take good care of pupils and the learning environment is very stimulating, mainly because of the excellent displays that festoon every room and corridor.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, children progress well, attaining most of the goals expected of five year olds by the end of Reception, except in language and mathematics which are below average. In the rest of the school, standards are normally average but they fluctuate depending on the different abilities of each small year group. Standards by Year 2 improved in 2006 and were above average. Pupils in the current Year 2 are making similarly good progress. By Year 6, standards were above average in 2005 but slipped to below average in 2006. However, pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress towards much higher targets.

Pupils behave well and get on with one another very well. There is little friction in the school because pupils are mostly sensible and older pupils have the maturity to manage younger pupils, especially in their role as buddies. As a result, pupils justifiably feel very safe. They increasingly lead a healthy life, especially through sport, although their knowledge of diet is simplistic. They play a full part in the school decision-making and interact extremely well with the local community and wider world. Pupils' cultural development is outstanding due to the school's high priority for this provision. Overall, they are well prepared for their future life.

Pupils' achievement is good because of effective teaching throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, set work that matches their abilities and provide good advice in class and through marking. There is also usually a good pace to learning. Teachers enrich the curriculum well; for example, through visits and visitors. Sometimes the format of lessons is quite rigid and does not take sufficient account of pupils' different ways of learning. Good systems to monitor pupils' progress help teachers to identify where and how support can be channelled.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership through clear direction and full involvement of all staff and governors in the running of the school. Good self-evaluation creates the right priorities for improvement, although the details and purpose of action plans are not explicit enough. Governors play an important role in supporting the school and maintaining good communication with parents. Parents are certainly appreciative of the school. 'Fabulous school,' wrote one. The school is in good shape and is set fair to improve further. As such, it provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of teaching strategies in lessons to match pupils' different learning needs.
- Ensure that the school's plans for development are more detailed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve equally well throughout the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Upon entering the Nursery, children's attainment is usually below average. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage and by the end of Reception standards are close to national expectations, although still below average in language and mathematical development.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Recent standards at Year 2 have been mostly average. They were above average in 2006, notably in writing and mathematics, but not in reading which was average. The school identified and has addressed a weakness in applying reading skills, which is raising standards. In addition, the school has also improved the performance of more able pupils.

Standards at Key Stage 2 have also been broadly average. They were above average in 2005 but fell to below average in 2006. This year group had an unusually high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, these pupils and the other pupils had made good progress since Year 2, especially in mathematics. According to the school's data and supported by inspection evidence, pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to attain higher than average results this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well and are very respectful to their teachers and to one other. As a result, they all get on extremely well. Their cooperation in lessons is very good and strengthens their learning. Their awareness about their own safety and that of others is excellent. They are very responsible and take their duties seriously, including their work on the school council; the vigilance of the buddies is impressive.

Pupils clearly enjoy school, although attendance remains broadly average, despite the school's best efforts. They appreciate the activities after school and most take part in at least one extra sport each week because they know the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through exercise. However, they are not very knowledgeable about the need for a balanced diet.

Pupils make a very good contribution to the local and wider community through performances, fundraising and links with overseas schools. These links, visits by African dancers and an Indian brass band, together with their excellent artwork, are fine examples of why their cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, overall, they are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. A particular strength lies in the friendly but focused atmosphere in each classroom, which encourages pupils to feel relaxed, be eager to work and become increasingly self-reliant. Teachers plan lessons and present new learning clearly, often using interactive whiteboards skilfully to demonstrate and reinforce new ideas. Consequently, pupils readily understand new learning.

Teachers have good expectations of pupils in the quality and presentation of their work. Pupils appreciate and learn from the detailed teachers' marking. The level of challenge in lessons is usually good but, sometimes, all pupils do the same work and so not all pupils are suitably challenged. In some lessons, there is not enough variety in the teaching strategies to take into account pupils' different ways of learning. Teachers are good at involving all pupils in lessons although, when pupils take turns to show their work, the pace of the lesson tends to falter.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum. There is rightly a clear focus on literacy, numeracy and science and basic skills in these subjects are well promoted across the curriculum. In addition, teachers enrich pupils' opportunities wisely; for example, through interesting visits and visitors. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good; the school has improved the proportion of time spent here on independent learning.

All pupils benefit equally from the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by adults and by sharply focused learning plans. Pupils' personal and social education is good, not least because staff are very good role models and enable pupils to become solid 'citizens'. Good links with other organisations broaden pupils' horizons. For example, the school council recently attended a meeting of the local district council. The learning environment is excellent. The sheer quantity and high quality of displays throughout the school are very motivational.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils, supporting and guiding them well. Its procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet requirements. All adults connected to the school are thoroughly vetted. There are regular checks on health and safety around the school. Pastoral care is very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and respond readily to any concerns; pupils and parents appreciate this.

Teachers not only monitor pupils' progress well but they also analyse the resultant data skilfully. This enables them, for example, to address issues like the comparative weakness in reading at Key Stage 1. It also helps them to set helpful learning targets for pupils. Pupils say that these are useful, although not all pupils can confidently recall them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is rightly respected by colleagues, staff and parents. She gives the school clear direction, championing the traditional values of education whilst embracing new ideas. She encourages a great sense of cohesion among staff and promotes their professional development well. The deputy headteacher and senior teachers lead their areas of responsibility effectively.

The school's self-evaluation is good. It has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses, which enables it to establish good priorities. However, its plans for development are not specific enough. Governance is good. Governors are supportive, have a good knowledge of the school

and some are regularly involved in the day-to-day life of the school. An impressive feature is their termly surgery for parents.

Parents think very highly of the school and feel that their children get a good deal. One wrote, 'I have every confidence in the standards of teaching and leadership.' The school has made good progress since the last inspection, maintaining good provision and raising standards. Because of this and the combined sense of purpose among all staff, the school has good capacity to improve.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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 | 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

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|--|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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

Hesleden Primary School

Hesleden

Nr Hartlepool

TS27 4PT

21 March 2007

Dear Pupils

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my day in Hesleden; I will not forget the wintry weather in a hurry. You all helped me to get to know your school quickly.

I especially liked the atmosphere in the school – not just the excellent and exciting displays but, more importantly, the way in which you all get on so well together. You behave sensibly and look out for one another extremely well. You concentrate well in lessons and are eager to learn. Your teachers set you challenging and interesting work and, as a result, you achieve well in the main subjects. I also was impressed by your artwork. The standards in your work generally are improving and the signs for this year are very promising.

You benefit from many exciting activities, like the African dancers, as well as links beyond the school in the wider community. However, I think that sometimes lessons do not always allow you to work at your own speed, so I have asked the school to improve this. Your headteacher and teachers work very hard to make your school even better and I hope that you continue to help them because I know that they value your opinions.

I wish you every success for the future!

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

School Inspector