

Baldwin's Gate CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124290
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292948
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Beacon
Headteacher	Richard Denly
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002
School address	Tollgate Avenue Baldwins Gate Newcastle ST5 5DF
Telephone number	01782 680649
Fax number	01782 681900

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Inspection number	292948

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 two Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils attend from the immediate area and surrounding rural villages. It is a socially and economically advantaged area. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. All pupils speak English fluently. The school has recently started to admit 3-year-old children part time. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is broadly average, although children's early reading skills are generally well developed. The school gained the Healthy Schools award in 2006.

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 serves its community effectively. Pupils make good progress because of the consistently good teaching. Children make a good start in the Reception class and continue to do well throughout the school. As a result, standards by the time they leave are above the national average. In writing, while pupils are good at producing long, interesting pieces of work in English lessons, their writing in other subjects is often of a lower standard. Another key factor in the consistently high standards is the good leadership and management, not least by the headteacher. He is suitably supported by other staff, who all take responsibility for some aspects of the provision. However, while teachers support each other well, they do not always evaluate their area of responsibility with sufficient rigour. This leads to some inconsistencies in aspects such as writing and the setting of targets, some of which are not sufficiently challenging to get the best out of pupils, particularly the more able ones. Governors provide good support and guidance and are not afraid to hold it to account. This effective leadership has helped the school make good improvement since the last inspection and shows why it should continue to do so.

Parents think highly of the school, particularly the good care, support and guidance it provides for their children. They are particularly pleased with the 'relaxed but well disciplined environment', 'high rate of progress' and the way pupils are 'very well prepared for high school'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result, and they are quick to say how much they enjoy school and feel safe. Their behaviour is good because that is what is expected. They value the interesting lessons and the way teachers help them when they are struggling. They enjoy the good, well planned curriculum that provides a good balance between work on developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and topic work that brings together different subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Have higher expectations of pupils' writing in all subjects.
- Ensure that subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility more rigorously.
- Set more challenging targets to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards attained by the oldest pupils are consistently above average. Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress as a result of the good teaching and well planned curriculum. By the end of their Reception Year, their attainment is above that expected nationally in all areas of learning. Pupils continue to do well in Years 1 and 2 and standards remain above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the case for some years, although in 2006 results were a little lower. By Year 6, standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. There is a very secure trend in above average standards over a number of years. The above average standards represent good progress. In English, however, while pupils read very well, some underachieve in their writing, particularly in subjects such as history and geography where they miss out punctuation and print rather than use joined up writing. Progress is better than was the case in last year's national tests when pupils had made only satisfactory gains from their high performance in their Year 2 tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well and make particularly good progress

in their reading. More able pupils generally do well and some attain very high standards. A small number, however, make slower progress than they could because the targets set for them are too modest.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development makes an important contribution to their learning. Attendance is good. Pupils say how much they enjoy school because of the friends they make and the interesting lessons. In class, they are eager to learn and behave well. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to stay safe and live healthily. One pupil explained how eating a healthy lunch prepares you well for work in the afternoon. They show good levels of maturity as they explore topics such as personal safety and bullying and are never afraid to ask questions to make things clearer. Pupils develop a good awareness of their community, particularly by making improvements to their school through the school council, hosting events for senior citizens and taking part in church services. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In subjects such as science, art and design and music, they learn to think deeply about subjects and appreciate the wonders of the world around them. They have a good awareness of local culture and speak knowledgeably about the history of the Potteries. Their understanding of other cultures, however, is limited and few show a good knowledge of different religions. Pupils are well prepared for the future by their well developed reading, number and ICT skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching explains why pupils maintain high standards throughout the school. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes where the teaching is lively and demanding. In the rest of the school, teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work and they respond positively by trying hard to succeed. Occasionally, however, teachers set their sights too low, or talk to the whole class for too long, and this means that more able pupils who could make faster progress are held back. Teachers make learning fun by using exciting resources and interesting methods. In one history lesson, for example, the teacher had pupils acting as 19th century pottery workers and watching films about living conditions at the time. Pupils loved this and learned a lot about how people lived and worked. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work regularly. This gives pupils a good feel for how they are doing and how they can improve. The very good partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils of all abilities get the support they need to succeed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has made significant improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection and it now provides an interesting range of activities that are relevant to the needs of all pupils. It also helps to make learning fun. For example, Reception class children delighted in taking part in a mini-beast hunt prior to learning more about living things back in the classroom. They had a wonderful experience and learned much in a short time. The curriculum does much to enhance pupils' future economic well-being with good provision for teaching basic reading, number and ICT skills. However, there are too few opportunities planned for pupils to develop their writing

skills to the full. The very well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme plays an important part in helping pupils understand the need to live healthily and stay safe. A wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school enrich the curriculum and many pupils say how much they enjoy these. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. As a result, they make good progress and are fully included in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children in the Nursery settle well because staff build good relationships with families before they start. In such a small school, teachers know pupils and their families well and this helps them provide a good level of care and support that makes pupils feel secure and valued. There are good procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils with good attention given to risk assessments and child protection. Working relationships between the school and health, social and welfare professionals are good and contribute much to pupils' well-being. Pupils are given good guidance to help them develop their personal and social skills, which explains why they have such a well developed understanding of how their actions affect others. As one parent put it, 'Pupils are positively encouraged to develop mutual respect for their peers.' The tracking of pupils' academic progress through the school is generally good, but the targets set for some more able pupils are sometimes too low. Similarly, teachers do not consistently use pupils' targets to show them how to move to the next stage in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and is highly respected by staff, pupils and parents. He has led the staff well in securing significant improvements since the last inspection through planned actions based firmly on reviewing practice and identifying strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear vision for further improvement that is shared by the staff and governors. Self-evaluation systems are generally good and give the school a clear idea of how well it is performing. The school recognises the need to develop the role of other staff in the leadership and management. Whilst they are very good at supporting one another, their monitoring sometimes lacks the rigour that would raise standards further. This explains some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils and the quality of writing from class to class. Governors know the school well and take a keen interest in all its work. They are both supportive and challenging. The day-to-day management of the school and its finances are efficient, and resources are managed well. The training and deployment of teaching assistants are particularly effective. The school has developed very good links with other schools and institutions that give them valuable opportunities to share facilities and expertise.

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

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

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	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

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	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

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

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	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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

15 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Baldwin's Gate Primary School, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 5DF.

Thank you for your important contributions to this inspection. You all made the inspectors very welcome, and those who were kind enough to speak to us told us a lot about your school. It is clear that you like being part of a small school where you know everyone and make good friends.

What we found out about your school.

You attend a good school. You make good progress. Your standards are above the national average in most subjects, although in writing, some of you could do even better. You develop your personal skills well. You enjoy lessons, especially art and design and information and communication technology, work hard and keep safe. Your behaviour is nearly always good and you are kind to each other. Your teachers are doing a good job. They make lessons interesting and help you learn quickly. Teachers check on your progress carefully and tell you clearly how to improve your work. The curriculum is planned effectively to give you a good balance of work in all subjects. It also helps you to learn about how to stay safe and live healthy lives. You are well cared for by all the staff. They know you all very well and help you when you are upset or worried. The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher and other leaders know how to improve things and ensure the school runs smoothly.

What we want the school do now.

- Give you more practice at writing in all subjects.
- Make sure your teachers check more carefully on how well other staff teach the subject for which they are responsible.
- Set some of you more challenging targets that help you make even better progress.

Yours sincerely Terry Elston Lead inspector