

Evergreen Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134663
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	294144
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Margerison

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Warwick Road Bishop Auckland Durham DL14 6LS
Telephone number	01388 459 721
Fax number	01388 459 722

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Evergreen Primary School caters mainly for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. However, a significant proportion of pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Many pupils have additional medical, physical and sensory disabilities. A few pupils have been diagnosed as having autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). One class caters specifically for pupils with these difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school opened in September 2005 in a new building following a local authority reorganisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. It draws its pupils from the local area and all pupils are brought to school.

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 has made rapid progress since it opened, primarily due to the drive and very clear vision of the headteacher and senior management team. They have successfully created an ethos of innovation and teamwork that is evident throughout the school in all aspects of its work. They are well supported by governors and subject leaders who are beginning to take a more proactive role in leading further developments. The school knows itself well; although, it is sometimes too modest in evaluating the quality of its work.

From a well below average starting point, pupils achieve well. They get a good start in the Foundation Stage where their personal and communication skills are nurtured very effectively. They also quickly learn what is expected of them in school. This establishes the basis for the good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning seen throughout the school. As pupils move through the school, they continue to build well on this secure basis. They make particularly good progress in developing their communication skills because staff are very consistent in their approach and make excellent use of a broad range of communication methods including signs and symbols to give instructions, to help pupils know what they are doing next and how they should behave. As a result, irrespective of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, by the time they leave the school, all pupils can make choices, express their opinions and share their ideas. Pupils also make good progress in developing their basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Consequently, they are well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their education.

Pupils' good progress is due to good teaching and learning and a good curriculum. Personal, health and social education is an important part of the curriculum and ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of how to look after themselves and the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Typically, teachers use ICT very effectively in lessons and ask questions that consistently challenge pupils and encourage them to contribute. Practical activities are used well to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils, including those with ASD, are very well managed in lessons so the pace of learning is not disrupted on those occasions when a pupil does react adversely to something. The specialist provision for those pupils with ASD is good, so relative to their starting point, pupils make good progress academically and in their personal skills. Central to pupils' good personal development are the good procedures to promote pupils' health and well-being and the excellent support pupils receive from the support staff in lessons and around school. The school has established very thorough procedures to track pupils' progress and the information is used well to identify the targets in pupils' individual plans and to review their progress. Some staff involve pupils in this process, but this is not consistent across the school so not all pupils have enough opportunities to think about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

The school development plan has provided a good basis for guiding the progress the school has made recently, but there are no references to improvements in pupils' performance as a measure of the success of new initiatives. Given the excellent leadership of the senior managers, the very thorough assessment procedures and the willingness of staff to take in new ideas, the school is well placed to improve further and build on its current successes. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use pupils' performance information more rigorously as a measure of the effect of new initiatives on pupils' progress.
- Involve pupils consistently across the school in setting and reviewing the progress they are making towards the targets in their individual plans.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment on entry to school is generally well below that expected, but there is a wide variation from pupil to pupil. Due to consistently good teaching, all pupils, irrespective of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. In the Foundation Stage, children get a good start to their education and make good progress in learning to communicate with adults and each other. More able pupils begin to recognise numbers and letters. Quite rightly, the school's main emphasis is on developing the pupils' basic skills of speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and ICT. As a result, pupils make consistently good progress in these areas of their learning. By the time they leave the school, all pupils can express their ideas and views, make choices and communicate using signs, symbols or speech. More able pupils read and write well and work independently on the tasks they are given. A small number of pupils reach levels close to those expected for their age in reading. Pupils' ICT skills are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Almost all parents expressed the view that their children enjoy coming to school and the vast majority were extremely positive about this. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils are really enthusiastic in lessons and want to take part in anything the school provides. In addition, their attendance is above average for similar schools. Many pupils join the school with limited personal skills. Due to very consistent approaches by all adults to promote good behaviour and provide opportunities for pupils to work and play together, they make good progress in this aspect of their learning. Pupils have a good understanding of how to look after themselves and stay safe in familiar surroundings. They also understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and eating sensibly.

Through the school council, pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community, but this is in its early stages of development so its effect on school improvement has been limited so far. However, due to their good basic communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, pupils are well prepared for moving onto the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Inspection evidence, particularly regarding pupils' achievement, shows that the school has been too modest in its evaluation of this aspect of its work. Throughout the school, teachers have a very good knowledge of the pupils and a very clear understanding of what they need to learn next. Teachers use assessment information well to plan pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). Some teachers involve pupils in reviewing their

own plans and progress, but this approach is not used consistently in all classes. However, activities in lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, reflect pupils' IEPs closely. Support staff are very clear about their role and which pupils they are working with. The very good teamwork between all adults is a notable feature in all lessons. As a result, teachers plan a good range of activities that closely match the diverse learning needs of the pupils in each class. Together with the excellent management of pupils with difficult behaviour, this ensures that pupils are well challenged. In the specialist class for pupils with ASD, staff use a range of management methods extremely well to ensure that pupils are constantly engaged in meaningful tasks. Teachers also use ICT very well to motivate pupils, encourage them to join in lessons and as a method of enabling them to show what they have learnt. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is based on providing children with a combination of real experiences that stimulates their interest and enthusiasm. This establishes the basis for the good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning seen throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In a short time, the school has established a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the diverse needs of the pupils. It provides them with good opportunities to develop their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This is well balanced by a good range of additional activities that broadens their experience of the world and develops their personal and social skills and understanding well. For example, plenty of visits are made to local places of interest; older pupils have a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre in the Lake District and there are a good number of well attended clubs at lunchtimes. The school has recognised that there is more scope to extend the range of extra-curricular activities after school and is investigating ways this could be achieved.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is a key strength of the school. Parents are right to be fully confident in the care provided for their children, many of whom have very specific personal care needs. Several aspects, such as the rigorous approach to ensuring pupils' health and safety, are excellent. All requirements regarding child protection and ensuring that pupils are safeguarded are firmly in place. Pupils have access to a full range of additional support, such as speech and language therapy and physiotherapy from the staff based on the school. The school also makes excellent use of its outstanding facilities available to provide regular hydrotherapy, massage, soft play and sensory stimulation. The support pupils receive in lessons is highly effective and the school has established good procedures to assess the progress pupils are making. The information is used well to set and review targets in pupils' individual plans. However, pupils are not involved sufficiently in this process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior managers provide outstanding leadership and in a very short time they have created a school with an ethos of innovation and teamwork between staff and pupils. This rapid progress is the result of an exceptionally clear vision for the school and is well supported by good systems to evaluate the

quality of its work. The school development plan has provided a sound basis to establish the school. However, it does not include any references to improvements in pupils' progress. Due to the rigorous assessment systems in place, the school is now in position to use this information as a measure of success of new developments. Up to now, most of the responsibility for leading school improvements has been taken by senior managers, but the role of subject leaders is developing well. A systematic approach to allocating staff to subjects has created a management structure that is well balanced and staff are now in a position to be more proactive in leading new initiatives in their own subjects. Governors are very supportive and have a good understanding of the progress the school has made. Recently, governors established links between themselves and different subjects and classes. They have plans in place to begin to monitor the work of the school more directly in the near future.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	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	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	1
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	3
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	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	3
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

29 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Evergreen Primary School, Durham, DL14 6LS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I really enjoyed joining in with your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. I am pleased to report that I think you go to a good school.

I am particularly impressed with the way that in a very short time, the staff, led well by the senior staff, have created a school that has a really positive atmosphere. Teachers make sure that you learn how to communicate with each other and with grown-ups in several different ways. You are taught well and you get a good start in the Foundation Stage. The standard of care and support provided for you is first class. As a result, you love coming to school, really enjoy getting involved and behave well. Importantly, you also achieve well in your work.

To make your school even better I have asked the governors and staff to provide more opportunities for you to be involved in seeing how well you are getting on. Your school has a clear plan for improving further and I have asked staff to use the information they have on how you are getting on to make sure that any new ideas are having a good effect on your learning.

Thank you again for your help and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy Margerison

Lead Inspector