



Bearpark Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114129
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 294559
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Colliery Road
School category	Community		Bearpark, Durham
Age range of pupils	4–11		County Durham, DH7 7AU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3848958
Number on roll (school)	102	Fax number	0191 3831904
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jeff Teasdale
		Headteacher	Mr Les Owen
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006	Inspection number 294559
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving an ex-mining village on the rural outskirts of Durham. Poverty levels locally are in the highest 20% nationally, and the proportion of pupils taking free school meals is above average. Many children start in the Reception class with levels of attainment well below those typical for their age. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Almost all the pupils are White British. The school has achieved the Healthy School standard and the Activemark for sport and physical education (PE).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. At its last inspection in November 2005, the school had important weaknesses in standards, expectations of the pupils' progress and the leadership and management of the school. The staff and governors immediately instituted a thorough review of the school's practice, supported well by the local authority. This led to sharply focused development in the weaknesses identified, especially in raising expectations of pupils' progress. Leadership is now satisfactory with some good features and management is satisfactory because rigorous monitoring, evaluation and development planning procedures have been put in place by senior managers and governors; these ensure that the changes work. Pupils' achievement has been raised and strengths in pupils' personal development maintained. Many parents feel that it is a fantastic school and say that their children love it. Improvement has been good in the last year and the school is well placed to continue getting better. It is now a satisfactory school with some good features.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Despite some good progress, standards are below those expected by the time children enter Year 1. Standards in Year 2 tests were below average in 2005 and at a similar level in 2006. These results reflect satisfactory progress since the entered Year 1. The school's results in the 2006 national tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards were below the levels expected nationally; nevertheless, in mathematics and science they improved well over the previous year, despite 65% of the pupils having learning difficulties and disabilities. Standards in English fell. Nonetheless, overall pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory given their starting points. This shows good improvement compared to the pupils' achievement in 2005. The current Year 6 is maintaining the improving trend; improved progress in learning is clear in pupils' work across the school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and the teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are higher, except in handwriting. The planning of lessons is based clearly on what staff know of pupils' needs. This helps pupils to learn effectively, especially in the older classes. A key strength is in the staff's good support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils feel safe, behave well and try hard in their work because they enjoy it. However, teachers do not always expect pupils to identify, fetch and return the resources they need to support their own learning.

The school provides good levels of care for its pupils and required safety and safeguarding procedures are in place. The curriculum is satisfactory, and there are strengths in art and design and physical education. These add well to pupils' good personal development, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, improved teaching and learning methods in English, mathematics and science have not been fully extended to the rest of the curriculum. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and local community, and are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in all aspects of English but especially in handwriting.
- Increase pupils' capacity to work independently in lessons.
- Extend the improvements in teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science to the rest of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory, but standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and Year 6. Progress in lessons is satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly for older pupils.

Children in Reception make good progress in personal, social and emotional development because the staff help them to develop their social skills quickly. By the end of Reception, children have made satisfactory progress but are still below average in key areas of learning.

Results in Year 2 tests are usually below average in reading, writing and mathematics, but vary year-on-year with the attainment at entry of each group of pupils. A falling trend in mathematics has been reversed by improved provision this year.

Results in Year 6 national tests improved well in mathematics and science in 2006, although still below average, but fell in English. Improved progress is clear in pupils' work across the school in response to teachers' higher expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities often make good progress because they receive good support. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement. Some pupils achieve good levels in art and design, PE and information and communication technology (ICT).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development remains a strength. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. For example, the gentle singing of a carol in assembly by the whole school was a significant moment of calm reverence. Pupils rightly say that they really enjoy being here, that they feel very safe, and that rare instances of bullying are swiftly dealt with by the staff. The staff work hard to establish good working relationships with pupils, using rewards effectively. Pupils repay this by behaving well and concentrating on their work. Pupils understand how to live healthily, and enjoy the many opportunities for physical exercise, including a 'wake and shake' session for Year 4 and 5 pupils every morning. The school works hard to try and make sure that all pupils learn to their full potential, and this is valued by parents. Attendance is average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has improved since the last inspection, although still satisfactory overall. The key improvement has been that teachers and support staff now expect pupils to make the progress of which they are capable, although some do not insist that pupils present their work carefully enough. Staff have developed good questioning techniques that involve pupils well, although some opportunities are missed to allow pupils to discuss their work in pairs or groups. Assessment through questioning is reinforced by helpful marking in English and mathematics. Accuracy in assessment means that planning for lessons in English, mathematics and science successfully addresses the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. Older pupils say that they now understand clearly what they are supposed to learn, and how to improve. The pace of most lessons is brisk, especially for older pupils. While pupils are reminded that work must be completed in the lesson, not all have learned how to work independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements satisfactorily, including in Reception where good new outdoor resources have improved children's outdoor learning. There are good enrichment activities for all pupils using the art and design skills of a support assistant and an experienced governor. The school has links with a wide range of sports clubs, and uses visits out of school well to develop pupils' cultural understanding. The focus on raising standards in core subjects has been correct, but new planning systems have not yet been used effectively in other subjects. This means that the school does not acknowledge sufficiently how good children's achievement is in some of these areas. The school offers a homework club that is used productively by many children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance combine to produce another strength of the school. All required safeguarding procedures are in place. Parents feel that the level of care for their children is very high, and say that no child is ever turned away. Some of those who have children with learning difficulties and disabilities say that the help their children receive increases their self-confidence so that they enjoy learning. Support for these pupils is good, and for some with the greatest need, it is excellent. Other pupils accept, support and value those with learning difficulties and disabilities, following the staff's good example. Guidance and support have improved in lessons and in teachers' marking of work, contributing well to pupils' improving progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management have improved to be satisfactory, with good features in leadership. The headteacher and assistant headteacher have worked with the whole staff to turn the weaknesses round. An important innovation is an effective system to monitor pupils' progress term-by-term. Governors accepted that they had not challenged the school enough in the past. A group of six governors has worked tirelessly with the school and local authority to monitor, evaluate and plan improvement more effectively to bring about key changes. The good partnerships with parents, other local schools, the local authority and Durham University have been helpful in this. Governors say that they are now much more 'switched on'. The school certainly knows its strengths and weaknesses as its latest self-evaluation shows. The local authority has provided high quality support to build teachers' skills and confidence in taking control of and working through the post-inspection action plan. The headteacher explained the school's new-found energy and confidence in saying, 'We decided that it is up to us to improve our children's learning and standards. Other people can help, but we have to do it!' This approach has led to the improving picture outlined in this report that has put the school in a good position to continue 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.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	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	3
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

Bearpark Primary School

Colliery Road

Bearpark

Durham

County Durham

DH7 7AU

11 December 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for your pleasant Bearpark welcome when I visited your school. You will remember that I came to see how well your school had made progress since its last inspection in November 2005. You were very helpful in answering my questions, letting me see your work, and telling me about your school.

You have kept up the pattern of good behaviour from the last inspection, obviously enjoy being at Bearpark, and get on well with your friends and the staff. I enjoyed hearing you sing 'Little Donkey' in assembly. Older children told me that their lessons are more interesting and that they know more about what to do to improve. You certainly know a good deal about staying safe, and about keeping healthy and fit.

I think that the school has made good improvements and looks as if it will carry on getting better. The staff have worked hard to help you do better in your work. I think that you could help as well by making your handwriting and your work neater and tidier, trying harder in reading and writing, and learning how to get the things you need in lessons for yourself and how to put them back when you have finished. The staff will help you with this so that you become more skilled in English, and more confident and independent in all your work.

I wish you all the best for your futures, wherever they may take you. I also hope you have a good Christmas and that the New Year is good for you, your family, your friends and your school.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson

Lead Inspector.