

Bowesfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111540
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	301748
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Barbara Hudson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Julie McGee
Headteacher	Miss Emily Hodgeon
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Northcote Street Stockton-on-Tees TS18 3JE
Telephone number	01642 601890
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bowesfield is smaller than most primary schools. It is located in an area of social and economic disadvantage. Half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is three times higher than the national average. A third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is twice the national average. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and nearly a half are learning English as an additional language, which is high compared with the national average. A very small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has a high proportion of pupils who join the school after the nursery and many leave before the end of Year 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school places emphasis on pupils' academic and personal development in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and their personal development is good. They contribute well to the school and the wider community. Most parents are supportive of the school and recognise the good work it does in encouraging their children to do their best.

Pupils achieve well even though standards are below the national average at the end of each Key Stage. The high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive good teaching and support. Children start school with skills well below those typical of three year olds. However, they make good progress in their speaking and personal development due to good teaching. Most make satisfactory progress in their reading, writing and mathematical development, but standards are well below those expected nationally when they leave the Foundation Stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 but because some still lack confidence in using and applying their language skills, standards in English and mathematics are well below average by the end of Year 2. At Key Stage 2, good teaching results in pupils increasing in confidence and applying their language skills with better effect. They make good progress and inspection evidence shows that pupils' standards currently in Year 6 are below average, but closer to the national average than the school's results last year.

Teaching is good because teachers know their pupils well and set work that meets their needs. Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory and is supported by a good range of enrichment activities. However, pupils have too few opportunities to make connections between subjects to build upon the skills and knowledge learned in one subject and apply them in others. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. They are keen to take responsibility and contribute to the school through volunteering to help with routine jobs and suggesting ideas through the school council. The school provides good levels of care and ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management are good. The strong leadership provided by the headteacher has accurately evaluated the work of the school and successfully supported staff. As a result, teaching has improved, standards are rising and the school's priorities for improvement are appropriate. Senior teachers are efficient in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision for English and mathematics but other subjects are not always evaluated with the same rigour. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and its capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English and mathematics and increase the pace of progress for children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Improve the curriculum provision to give greater opportunities for pupils to apply their learning across subjects and ensure that staff provide consistently rigorous evaluation of all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, even though standards are below the national average. When children start nursery they attain well below what is typical for 3 year olds. They make good progress in speaking and in their personal, social, and emotional development. Satisfactory progress is made in reading, writing and mathematics but pupils are well below many of the learning goals expected by the time they are 5 years old. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 but standards by the end of Year 2 are well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because, despite much good teaching, many pupils lack confidence in consistently applying their language skills in their work. However, at Key Stage 2 pupils' confidence and language skills improve and with good teaching they apply their skills conscientiously, which leads to good progress. In turn, results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have risen since 2004 at a much faster rate than nationally but remain below the national average. The challenging targets set for pupils are usually met because if some pupils fall behind, they are quickly identified and strategies are in place to help them catch up. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and those looked after by the local authority make good progress. Girls usually attain better than boys due to the higher proportion of boys with learning and behavioural difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy school. They have strong friendships, collaborate well in lessons and value their education. The school's tireless efforts to improve attendance and punctuality are beginning to have a positive impact. Inspection evidence shows these are now satisfactory. Pupils are aware of the need to keep healthy and explain how good food and plenty of exercise helps achieve this end. Pupils feel safe in school and their good behaviour contributes towards this feeling of security. They show good levels of care and respect for each other and explain that, '...although we all look different, we should be treated equally well so that no one is left out or favoured above others'. Pupils contribute well to school life and willingly help out with routine jobs. They know their views are sought, through the school council, and their opinions taken into account. Pupils are developing the basic skills in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) which prepares them appropriately for their next stage of education and future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching assistants make an important and effective contribution to pupils' learning. All staff have good relationships with the pupils. They are very proficient at developing pupils' confidence, vocabulary and speaking skills. This leads to younger pupils making good progress in speaking and developing a basic grounding in literacy and mathematics. This is built upon effectively as teachers strengthen opportunities for these skills to be reinforced and applied in Key Stage 2. Teachers are good at developing pupils' thinking

and reasoning skills by supporting and encouraging them to find the best solution to what they are doing rather than simply telling them the answer. Teachers' marking of work is good, providing a good balance between celebrating success and pointing out how it can be improved. This means that pupils know what they have to do and what they have to achieve. However, in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 pupils sometimes have too much choice in the activities and are unsure of what they are expected to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with good enrichment activities. Teachers are good at integrating speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills across all subjects in the curriculum and this has contributed to the improving standards. However, opportunities to give coherence to learning through links between subjects are less secure. Consequently, pupils do not always see the relevance of what they learn in one subject with learning in others and miss connections, which would help their understanding. Effective provision for science, physical education and personal, social and health education contributes to the pupils' good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Recent investment to improve provision for ICT has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although outdoor play is underdeveloped, the school has identified this and has a significant improvement project planned. The school uses a range of personnel from local secondary schools, the City Technology College, Tees Active and from the local Healthy Schools initiative to enhance the curriculum. Pupils spoke excitedly about the many visitors and the regular visits to places of educational interest. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good and this contributes to pupils' enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding systems meet national guidelines and risk assessments are in place. The school has good strategies in place to ensure that pupils' welfare, pastoral and emotional needs are supported. The children in the nursery settle well into the school environment. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and have confidence that they are well cared for. Links with external agencies provide good support for vulnerable pupils, enabling them to make good academic progress and very good progress in their personal development. Those learning English as an additional language are well supported. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, along with those who are looked after by the local authority, are supported well with good support plans and regular reviews.

The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic progress is good. Pupils are very clear about what they have to do to improve their work because teachers explain clearly what they are going to learn, mark pupils' work well and provide them with criteria for how they can be successful in their lessons. The progress pupils make in English and mathematics is monitored regularly and the information gathered is used well to identify those who are not achieving as well as expected and to provide additional help and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management have had a positive impact on pupils' academic achievements and personal development. This is due to the strong leadership of the headteacher who is clearly focused on raising achievement and improving provision for all pupils. The headteacher has worked effectively with the local authority and consultants to improve provision. As a result, standards are rising at a faster rate than the national trend, pupils are achieving more and senior teachers are gaining skills to evaluate the school's work and implement improvement strategies. Subject leaders provide satisfactory leadership. Their work in leading developments in English and mathematics has contributed well to improved achievement and standards and the better assessment of pupils' work. However, monitoring and evaluation of other subjects in the curriculum is not carried out with the same rigour. Governance is satisfactory. The headteacher keeps governors fully informed and many new governors are attending training courses to strengthen their expertise. Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the good levels of care and education their children receive. Financial management is secure and the school offers good value for money.

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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	3
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	3
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	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?	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.

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	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

11 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bowesfield Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 3JE

Mrs Ulyatt and I thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your school very much. We found all of the children, staff and governors very helpful and we appreciated the honest way in which you talked to us about your school. You all helped us to understand your school.

We are pleased to tell you that we agree with you that Bowesfield Primary School is a good school.

We were particularly impressed with the hard work you do in lessons and the good progress that you make. We were pleased with your good behaviour and how you are kind and friendly to each other. It was good to see how you respect the adults who work with you. The lessons the teachers provide for you are good and you appeared to enjoy them. You also appreciate and enjoy the many visits and visitors and after-school clubs that are provided for you. I know that many of you were looking forward to your visit to York and hope you had a good time. Your parents wrote and told us that they find the school to be a very caring place. They also said that the adults in the school give you a good education and encourage you to do your best. We agree with your parents.

The staff and governors are working hard to make your school an even better place. They have a good understanding of what is good at your school and what needs to be better. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you to attain better standards in English and mathematics and have asked them to make the curriculum even more meaningful so that learning will be more enjoyable.

With very best wishes for your future,

Barbara Hudson

Lead Inspector