

Carr Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108321
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	309647
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Carol Gater

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	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Martin Gannon
Headteacher	Mr Callum Kidd
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Carr Hill Road Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE9 5NB
Telephone number	0191 4771203
Fax number	0191 4213858

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Carr Hill Community Primary School is a large school, serving a predominantly White British population with a small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Few pupils have English as an additional language. The school serves an area of high social and economic disadvantage and an exceptionally high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average.

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 in which pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is recognised by parents who hold the school in high regard and give credit to the headteacher and staff for providing a supportive, caring environment. The view of one parent that their child had gained in confidence and gone from strength to strength is echoed by many.

Pupils enjoy attending school and feel safe. The many activities the school provides, including those arranged through the extended schools coordinator and the sports partnership, are much appreciated by pupils. These activities contribute well to both personal and academic development. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and balanced diets and the school's work in this area has been recognised through the Healthy Schools' Award. From the time they start school, young children are encouraged to take responsibility and work in a team. An active school council represents the views of pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in community events and they develop social skills that prepare them well for their future.

Pupils enjoy learning because they develop good relationships with the staff and teachers take care to plan stimulating activities to encourage thinking and participation. Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school but planning for different ability groups does not consistently make the best possible use of increasingly accurate and informative assessment information. This means that in a few lessons pupils could make more progress. The curriculum is good. Links are made between subjects to make learning meaningful. The school attaches great importance to providing the pupils with as many cultural experiences as possible. The headteacher and governors have secured funding through the Community Cohesion national initiative to purchase two new mini-buses to offer pupils even more opportunities to widen their experiences.

There has been a focus on the development of reading and writing and basic skills to address standards that have been below the national average in recent years, particularly in reading and writing. Teachers are addressing these issues and new resources and programmes have been introduced. In addition, a new system that helps staff and the leadership team to monitor pupils' progress has been implemented. This is beginning to impact and standards in Year 6 which are currently broadly in line with the national average. For pupils who entered the school with skills well below that typical for their age, this represents good achievement.

Pupils are effectively cared for, guided and supported. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well due to the effective targeted support they receive. Excellent partnerships with parents and external agencies enhance this provision. For example, the school is working closely with the neighbouring children's centre to generate a common understanding of children's early development in all areas of learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to providing the very best for the pupils in their care. They have accurately identified the strengths of the school and areas for development. The capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good in all areas of learning. Effective leadership has established a strong team approach within Nursery and Reception classes. This is having a positive impact on children's development. Good organisation, extremely positive relationships and a consistently calm approach help children to settle quickly. Staff offer high standards of care and children's personal, social and emotional development is good. From very low starting points, particularly in language development, children make good progress. Good teaching is based on increasingly accurate knowledge of each child's individual achievements and capabilities. Children enjoy their well-planned learning in classrooms and the outside learning area. Lively displays, rich in vocabulary, are testament to the wide variety of interesting and stimulating activities. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities which promote independence. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively by teachers to stimulate learning. Children are confident in using the interactive whiteboard in independent activities. Staff frequently extend children's learning through careful discussion and questioning, although such opportunities are not fully exploited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers make better use of assessment information when planning for the different ability groups in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Despite their good progress, few reach the expected levels for their age by the end of Foundation Stage.

In past years, standards declined, particularly in reading and writing. In all subjects, few pupils achieved the higher levels. New strategies have been put in place to arrest this decline and standards are now rising. In the present Year 2 there has been a noticeable improvement in reading. Year 6 teacher assessments and early indications of the unvalidated results of 2008 tests show that this year, standards are broadly average, including the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels. Given their low starting points, this represents good achievement. The school's internal tracking system shows that achievement, for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. The data shows that pupils are on course to meet challenging targets in 2009.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their well-being are outstanding. These strengths are at the heart of what the school provides for all its pupils. One pupil comments that 'no-one is left out'. Even the very young children understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles, shown in the Foundation Stage Healthy Teeth Award. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the many, varied sporting activities that are on offer. They feel safe and secure, confident that staff will provide support and advice if needed. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are extremely considerate and polite. They look

forward to coming to school and say that lessons are fun. They show respect for others and for the school environment and are very sensibly manage their feelings and relationships. There is a very strong feeling of responsibility amongst pupils. The school council is pro-active and members are currently planning improvements to the playground. Older pupils eagerly help the younger children by acting as reading buddies. Pupils participate in many community events and raise money for various charities. They have recently organised and held a sale of their own artwork. The very good social skills that pupils have developed by the time they leave school prepare them well for their next stage in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers establish very purposeful relationships with pupils and these contribute well to their exemplary behaviour and good learning. Effective classroom organisation and lively approaches mean that lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace. Good use is made of audio and visual resources to motivate pupils. In the very best lessons a high level of challenge for all pupils is carefully sustained. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to play an effective role in meeting the needs of identified pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The current focus on speaking and listening is accelerating learning in different contexts. Staff consistently give clear explanations and identify criteria for success. They use a wide variety of strategies to ensure that pupils are involved in their own learning and, from an early age, evaluate their own success. This is raising the pace of pupils' progress. With the emergence of a more effective system for checking pupils' progress, the time is ripe for teachers to make better use of the information now available to plan more precisely for different ability groups to ensure they all make as much progress as possible in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' needs are well met through a good range of activities, both in and outside of lessons. A particularly strong approach to supporting pupils' personal and social development helps pupils to grow in maturity and confidence. The school places an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills. This is having an impact on pupils' progress and self-esteem. Recent developments within the curriculum are beginning to establish links between learning in different subjects and this is making learning more purposeful. It is ensuring a balance between subjects as is reflected in the school gaining the Artsmark Gold. Well-chosen visits and visitors, residential visits and a wide range of out of school activities successfully enrich pupils' lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The personal care offered to pupils is of the highest level. It ensures they are safe, happy and able to enjoy their learning. Many parents identify this as a significant strength of the school. Measures to ensure pupils' health, safety and protection are firmly established. Outstanding relationships with parents and outside agencies contribute to the collective support of pupils

and their families. It is the wealth of knowledge that staff have of individual pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables targeted support to be effective.

Induction procedures for Nursery children and transition arrangements beyond this are thorough, adding to pupils' sense of security. The recently introduced procedures to track pupils' academic progress provide an accurate picture of pupils' progress but teachers have yet to use it consistently to unveil its full potential as an aid to raising standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher and governors share a strong commitment to provide the best education for all pupils. The school has accurately identified its strengths and areas to be developed and governors are aware of these. Governors are very supportive and are particularly keen to make a greater contribution to the school's monitoring and evaluation processes. The headteacher has utilised the expertise of key staff and the leadership team have clearly identified roles in raising achievement and standards. They have put initiatives in place that are already having an impact. They contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process, support colleagues and identify priorities for the school's improvement plan. A more comprehensive and robust tracking system allows the team to have an overview of standards and progress across the school. This has focused leaders to set challenging targets for all pupils. The headteacher has actively sought funding and grants and invested them in the school and its grounds to improve the learning environment for all. He effectively deploys staff to the pupils' best advantage. The school provides good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

9 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carr Hill Community Primary School, Gateshead, NE9 5NB

I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Mr Painter, Mr Dixon and I were very impressed by your excellent behaviour. You were very polite and helpful – a credit to your school!

You gave us a great deal of information that told us how much you like your school. You appreciate the activities that are arranged, particularly your PE lesson at the Leisure Centre. You also enjoy the many visits that are organised and I know that you are looking forward to using the new mini-buses for these. Your residential visit certainly scores top marks with you! The youngest children like learning outdoors in their specially designed area.

You know a great deal about keeping healthy and staying safe. Many of you help with the running of your school; for example as a member of the school council, reading to younger children, helping others at playtime or helping your teachers in class. There was a long list of interesting events you take part in, such as singing at The Sage. It was good to see that you also think about others by raising money for different charities.

We agree with you that Carr Hill Primary is a good school. Your teachers make lessons 'fun', they know you very well and share targets with you to help you improve. Most of you are now enjoying reading the new books the school has bought, and in 'Big/Brave Writing' you are writing much more and remembering to check for VCOP. Keep this up!

Your teachers are going to check how well you should be doing and make sure that activities are planned so that you improve even more and at a quicker rate.

The headteacher, staff and governors care for all of you and want the very best for you. Carry on working hard, behaving well and looking after each other and you will achieve it.

Thank you once again for sharing your school with us. We wish you all great things for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Gater

Lead inspector