

Blaydon West Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108349
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	309654
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judith Watson
Headteacher	Mrs Paula Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Blaydon Bank Blaydon-on-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE21 4PY
Telephone number	0191 4143286
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Nearly all the pupils are White British. A very small number of pupils who have recently joined the school speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. More pupils than average have learning difficulties or disabilities, but the proportion having a statement of special educational need is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Standards in the school have declined since its last inspection in 2004 and are well below average. The school's results in national tests have fallen in the last three years. Pupils' achievement is inadequate because too little progress is made between Year 1 and Year 6. This is because teaching and the curriculum are inadequate. Overall, they do not provide a good base for pupils to make steady progress throughout each year, and year on year. Expectations of the pupils are not high enough and information from assessments is not used sufficiently in planning to provide all groups of pupils with tasks at which they can succeed. This prevents pupils from developing independence and the confidence to become good learners. Where the teachers pitch the work accurately to cater for different needs, pupils work confidently and enjoy their learning. The curriculum for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is inadequate.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Their attendance has improved this term, due to closer links with families to encourage better attendance. The pupils are usually well behaved, though their concentration in lessons lapses, often because the work does not excite or engage them. Pupils are beginning to take some responsibility for improving the school and older pupils help it to run smoothly by acting as 'playground buddies'. Pupils eat healthily and take plenty of exercise and say they feel safe in school. By the time they leave the school too many pupils are ill-prepared for secondary education because of their weak basic skills. The school provides satisfactory care and personal guidance for pupils. It ensures they are safe and secure in school. Guidance for pupils to improve their learning is inadequate because marking lacks rigour and precision and not enough of it shows pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils who have learning difficulties or difficulties and those who learn English as an additional language are not well enough supported in lessons to make satisfactory progress.

Despite strong and determined leadership by the recently appointed headteacher, the school's leadership and management are inadequate. Actions taken since the last inspection to raise standards have been ineffective. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's weaknesses have not been rigorous enough to identify the most important areas for improvement. Governance of the school is inadequate. Governors have not held the school to account for pupils' underachievement, overstaffing and a lack of resources to teach the ICT curriculum. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The majority of children start in the Nursery with standards that are well below those typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their academic and personal development during their time in the Nursery and Reception. They enjoy their schooling and begin to learn how to keep safe and healthy. Leadership is satisfactory and appropriate links are established with parents. Better accommodation and

closer teamwork this term are improving provision, as teachers work together to assess children's learning more regularly and base their planning on a clearer picture of children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the school's expectations of the pupils and take closer account of information from assessments in planning for their different needs.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum for English, mathematics and ICT.
- Monitor the implementation of planned improvements closely, and evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement.
- Strengthen the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for the quality of education and standards attained by the pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are well below average and pupils' achievement is inadequate. Despite making satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, many children are not ready to tackle work in the National Curriculum when they start in Year 1. The school's results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 have declined in recent years from average to below average. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well below those expected for the age of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points at the end of Reception.

By Year 6, standards are well below average. Many pupils have significant gaps in their learning and they have made too little progress during their time in Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection there has been a decline in the school's performance in English, mathematics and science. In 2006, the school's results in national tests for Year 6 were below average and the progress of pupils from their starting points in Year 3 was poor. Results from 2007 show a further decline in standards and progress, with only half of the Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics, while progress in English was significantly below average. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make significantly less progress than similar pupils nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development of the pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Whilst pupils generally show respect for each other and their teachers, there are instances where silly and slightly aggressive behaviour occur. Pupils' attendance is just below average, but is improving this term. Pupils are willing to accept responsibilities such as supporting younger counterparts in the school by acting as buddies in the playground. They are interested in the spiritual side of life and other cultures, as reflected in their eagerness to learn about the Ancient Greeks. They enjoy school, feel safe and show an increasing desire to eat healthily. Pupils welcome the school's strong commitment to physical education and take part in the many after-school activities on offer. They are aware that they can make a difference in giving their views to surveys and the school council. Nevertheless, for a significant number of pupils, their basic skills by the time they leave this school do not prepare them well enough for future education and employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate overall and, as a result, too many pupils underachieve. The quality of planning varies widely. Not enough of it is based on a good knowledge of the needs and interests of different groups of pupils. Where pupils' learning is assessed accurately, the teaching is based on realistic expectations of what pupils can do and work is pitched at the correct level for them to make a confident and prompt start with tasks. Too often, these assessments are not accurate and, where this occurs, pupils are often set tasks that are too difficult, so that they cannot work independently and at a good rate. The consequence is that too many pupils are passive so they make little progress within lessons and show little interest in learning. Opportunities to clarify pupils' understanding are missed, partly because teaching assistants are not always deployed efficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate. Provision for literacy and numeracy is inadequate overall, because it does not ensure enough continuity and progression in pupils' basic skills as they move through the school. Provision for ICT is inadequate. The school does not have enough computers to teach the curriculum. At present pupils' ICT skills continue to fall behind those of their peers in other schools because they do not have enough access to computers. Improvements in this term to teachers' planning are beginning to promote basic skills in other subjects.

The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and improving as new systems ensure that pupils have clear understanding of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. The school provides interesting visits and residential trips for pupils and makes satisfactory links with other schools to extend pupils' learning. There is good provision for lunchtime and after-school clubs, where teachers give freely of their time to support pupils' interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has procedures to safeguard pupils and to ensure that they are safe and secure in school. Teachers and support staff are alert to their pupils' personal and emotional needs and relationships are satisfactory. Pupils say that they know who to turn to for advice if they have a problem. Parents are pleased that supervision in the playgrounds has improved since the headteacher took up post.

Guidance for learning is inadequate because pupils' learning is not assessed regularly or accurately enough. There is much inconsistency in the quality of marking, some of which is poor. While in some classes pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work, this is having little impact because pupils have too little understanding of their learning targets. Links with external agencies to support pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are satisfactory, but there is not enough skilled support in school to ensure these pupils make expected progress.

Concerns raised by a parent during the inspection are being investigated by the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate and the school lacks the capacity to improve. Since the last inspection, monitoring and evaluation activities have not been focused on the most significant weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation does not provide a sufficiently accurate view of its provision to provide a secure basis for planning improvements. Standards have declined over the last three years and there is widespread underachievement. Too little use is made of challenging targets to act as a spur for raising standards. Governance is inadequate. The governing body has not held the school to account over standards, the resource implications of high staffing levels and the poor provision for ICT, since the last inspection.

The recently appointed headteacher has acted quickly to enlist the advice of the local authority to support improvements to the quality of teaching. She has accurately identified where the school needs to improve most urgently and is introducing systems to assess and track pupils' learning more effectively. She has been well supported in making improvements by the recently appointed leader of mathematics, who makes accurate evaluations of provision. The headteacher has won the support of parents for, among other things, her immediate improvements to the supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes.

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
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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blaydon West Primary School, Gateshead, NE21 4PY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It was interesting to talk with you and find out about your school. We were pleased to see that most of you know how to behave in lessons so that everyone can get on with their work. Perhaps those of you who don't yet, could try a bit harder. We also saw that some of you found it difficult to concentrate at times. It was good to see how well your buddies looked after younger children in the playground and helped things to run smoothly there. Some of you are really helpful in and around the classroom and show that you take responsibility seriously. This, and the contribution you are beginning to make to improving the school through the school council, is helping to prepare you to become good citizens. We could see that many of you are trying hard to improve your attendance this term and it is getting better. Well done for that and keep it up! It does make a difference to your learning.

We have some concerns about your learning, because many of you have not made as much progress as you could. To enable you to reach higher standards we have recommended that your school is placed in 'special measures'. This means it will receive extra support, and inspectors will return to check that your school is improving. This should help your teachers to have a better idea of what you need to learn, help you to work at a faster rate and make your learning more enjoyable. Your school will also get help to organise changes so that your headteacher and teachers can improve things quickly.

You can do your bit by trying hard in class, listening carefully and starting quickly with your work. We hope that your school will soon be able to improve without outside help, because that will mean that your learning has got better and your teachers have a good idea of what you need to learn next.

We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick and Mr Peter Bannon

Inspectors