

North Fawdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108471
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	309698
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	39
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Farrington
Headteacher	Mrs Lorraine Alexander
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brotherlee Road Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 2SL
Telephone number	0191 2851350
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average and draws its pupils from an area with high levels of social disadvantage. A much greater proportion of pupils claim a free school meal than is typical of other primary schools. Most pupils are of White British background but an increasing number of pupils, who are at an early stage of learning English, join the school part way through their primary schooling. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater than the national average. A significant number of these pupils have emotional and behavioural as well as learning difficulties. In September 2008 the school became host to a nurture unit for Key Stage 1 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and is currently providing support for three pupils. The school provides education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that supports pupils' personal development well. The school is good at linking up with external agencies and individuals to gain additional help and support for pupils. It is an inclusive school where the different pupil groups are well integrated into classes although this is at an early stage for those with the nurture unit. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and have confidence in the adults who support them. They say that they enjoy school and attendance is broadly average. Relationships are harmonious and pupils usually behave sensibly. Pupils choose to eat and drink healthily at break and lunchtimes. They demonstrate good awareness of the benefits of caring for the environment. Older pupils are proud of the contribution they make to the smooth running of the school and to their local community through schemes such as the 'Junior Wardens'. Pupils are well prepared for the future in developing positive attitudes to learning and good social skills but are less well prepared in terms of their progress in developing basic skills.

Pupils' achieve satisfactorily. Although standards in national tests in recent years have in the main been well below the national average, there are signs of improvement. Standards remain lower than average but there is an increase in the number of pupils reaching expected levels. Where teaching is consistently good and the curriculum well adapted to meet pupils' needs, for example in Year 2, pupils make good progress. Some good teaching is evident across the school but this is not yet consistent. Therefore, teaching and the curriculum remains satisfactory overall. Improvements in teacher's ability to assess pupils' work accurately means that they now have a good understanding of individual pupil needs. They are aware that these needs differ considerably year-on-year but do not always use this information effectively to vary their teaching styles or to adapt the curriculum in order to build progressively on pupils' prior knowledge and skills.

Pastoral care is good and procedures to safeguard pupils are secure. The strong nurturing ethos in the school and the close attention to the social needs of individual pupils help them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, because the quality of academic guidance is not as effective as the pastoral support pupils receive.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is suitably focused on increasing pupils' rate of progress. The targets the school sets are generally challenging and are raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. The analysis of pupils' performance has increased and all staff have the information they need to plan work to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. There are extensive systems of self-evaluation and for monitoring the work of the school. These tend however to concentrate more rigorously on ensuring that initiatives are implemented rather than the impact they are having in raising standards. This gives the school a slightly inflated view of the quality of its provision and limits the effectiveness of leaders and managers when planning for further improvement. As a result, despite evidence of improvement since the last inspection, the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The school have worked hard since the last inspection to improve provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and this is now satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry to Nursery varies year-on-year but overall is well below that which is typical of three-year-olds.

Generally, attainment in communication, language and literacy is the weakest area, which for many groups of children has a profound impact on later learning in English. The school is tackling this well with changes in teaching and this is beginning to have a positive impact with children in the current Reception class making good progress in their understanding of letters and sounds. Staff understand the needs of young children and manage them well providing lots of encouragement and well tailored activities which stimulate curiosity and a desire to learn. As a result, children's achievement is satisfactory and standards are improving although children leave Reception with standards that are lower than expected. The school pays close attention to children's safety and well-being and children are settled and happy in school. The EYFS is led and managed satisfactorily. However, not all the required policies and procedures to ensure children's welfare are fully in place. There are appropriate plans for improvement, although, the impact of these is hindered by limited staffing resources. The number of staff available meets statutory requirements. The EYFS provision is overseen by a qualified teacher but the organisation of staff limits the amount of high quality adult intervention, particularly for the Nursery children. This is one of the main reasons why children do not progress at a faster rate both personally and academically.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a greater variety of teaching and learning styles to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Use information more effectively to adapt the curriculum to build progressively on pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Sharply focus monitoring activities on the impact of provision on the standards which pupils reach.
- Improve the organisation of the staff in the EYFS unit to ensure that all children have equal access to high quality learning opportunities

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils attainment on entry to Year 1 varies year-on-year but is generally well below average particularly in the key elements of basic literacy. Over the last few years, with a few variations, results of national tests have generally remained well below the national average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. However, although standards remain lower than usually seen, there is an improving picture especially in the number of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. At times during their schooling, pupils make faster progress than at others and this is directly linked to the quality of teaching they receive. The appointment of new staff and intensive support from the local authority is helping to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching. Specific initiatives, for example, those aimed at improving standards in writing are beginning to have the desired effect and more pupils in each class are now working at the levels expected for their age. For older pupils however this continues to be hindered by gaps in their knowledge of basic skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to overcome their barriers to learning and make at least satisfactory and at times good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their English acquisition. Pupils in the nurture unit are making good progress towards their personal targets as a result of sensitive and skilled support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils quickly learn good values and clearly respect different beliefs. They respond well to the opportunities provided to work and play together and they know the rules that apply in respect of their behaviour. They try hard to follow these rules, so that the behaviour of the majority of pupils is good. A few pupils with specific emotional and behavioural problems continue to find it difficult to manage their own behaviour but effective support from staff ensures that this does not impact on the learning, safety or well-being of others. Pupils make good choices of food at lunchtime because the school actively promotes healthy eating. Fruit and other healthy foods are increasingly popular and playtimes are active, social occasions. Pupils are clear about how to stay safe and they show a good awareness of the dangers they may encounter in their everyday lives although some do need reminders of the need to put this knowledge into practice. Pupils are rightly proud of the part they play within their school community and there is good participation in wider community events. As they move through the school, pupils make good progress in their social development. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are less well developed. Overall pupils are soundly prepared for the future in their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers get on well with pupils and manage behaviour effectively. This is particularly important as most classes have a significant minority of pupils whose emotional and behavioural difficulties require skilled support. The partnership between teachers and their assistants is a strength of this provision. As a result, these pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress with some overcoming their difficulties to reach the standards expected of pupils of a similar age. Teachers generally plan interesting activities and make good use of resources such as computer programs to capture pupils' attention. They are aware that pupils respond especially well to practical activities. However, in some classes teaching and learning styles lack variety. At these times pupils are not motivated to learn at the pace of which they are capable and progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is adapted well in terms of specific programmes to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who are in danger of underachieving. These activities focus precisely on pupils' needs and enable them to learn well. When these pupils are taught with their class group however, curriculum provision is often the same for all pupils and at these times their progress is limited. Through the personal, social and health education programme, the school is effective in developing pupils' awareness of safe and healthy living. Additional activities, such as French, Italian, visits and visitors, extend the pupils' skills and enjoyment of school. Older pupils enjoy their residential visits when they learn how to cooperate and try out new things.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff understand pupils' personal needs well and the school provides a safe and caring place where pupils enjoy their education. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet national guidelines. Pupils with specific needs, including those for whom English is not their first language, are provided with sensitive targeted support which successfully helps them to overcome their barriers to learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Most pupils know their group or class targets. However, many are less confident in how this relates to their own work or how to use this information to bring about improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, staff and governors effectively promote pupils' personal development and are committed to developing the school further. The headteacher has been successful in introducing rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress. This information is used well to provide an alternative curriculum and intervention support for those pupils who are in danger of underachieving. Priorities for improvement are clearly identified; as a result, progress for all pupils is at least satisfactory. Regular monitoring of the schools provision ensures that agreed procedures and initiatives are implemented consistently. Monitoring is less effective however in identifying what works well and what does not, in terms of raising standards. Consequently, although there are signs of improvement, this is still at a satisfactory rather than good rate. Governors are supportive of the school and are increasingly holding the school to account for its performance. However, they are not ensuring that all of the requirements for the EYFS are fully met. The school's contribution to community cohesion is currently satisfactory and developing well. Good links with the Children's Centre which shares the school site is helping the school to tailor its provision to meet the needs of pupils and their families.

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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Fawdon Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne,

NE3 2SL

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I enjoyed talking with you, watching your lessons and looking at your books. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and makes sure that you make satisfactory progress in your work. What the school does best is to help you to develop into well-rounded young people. You told me that you enjoy school a lot and that you appreciate the extra activities that the school provides. I was impressed with how well you behave and how you try to do your best. Your teachers make sure that your lessons are not disrupted by anyone being silly and you told me that this helps you to get on with your work. Some of you told me about the importance of making healthy choices about what you eat. You said that the adults look after you very well and make sure that you feel safe at school.

The adults in school want to keep improving what they provide for you to make sure that you do as well as you can. There are some things that I have asked the school to do to help with this.

Ensure that all of your teachers provide you with lots of different ways of learning.

Ensure that each class is given the level of work they need to help them to reach higher standards.

Ensure that those who lead and manage the school know exactly how well things are working and whether or not they are the right things to help you to do your best.

Check the organisation of staff in the Nursery and Reception classes to ensure children get all the help that they need.

You can help with this by making sure you come to school regularly and by continuing to try your best in all of your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector