

Kenton Bar Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108489
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	309704
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Neil HMI

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	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Angela Hughes
Headteacher	Mr Tony Leonard
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2005
School address	Ryal Walk Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 3YF
Telephone number	0191 2860536
Fax number	0191 2862287

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, the use of assessment, and the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its performance. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; a range of school documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kenton Bar Primary is a school of average size in the Kenton ward of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The attainment of children when they start school in the Nursery and in Reception is far lower than is typical for children of that age. The proportions of children entitled to free school meals and of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very high. The percentage of pupils who use English as an additional language, of whom several are at an early stage of acquisition, is above average. Considerable numbers of pupils leave and join the school during the year. In April 2008, 18 pupils were admitted following the closure of a local primary school. The school has an additional resource centre for a few pupils with communication difficulties linked to Asperger's syndrome and autism.

The school has the Healthy Schools and Activemark Gold awards.

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. The staff work very hard to ensure pupils' very diverse needs are met. Parents confirm their children are happy and prepared well for the next stage in their education. As one commented, 'He has enjoyed his time here and has had a good start for years to come'.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their social skills, but by the time they begin Key Stage 1 their language skills are still well below what is typical for children of that age. They make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1; by the time they are seven, standards remain well below average. Standards are very low in Key Stage 2, although the 2007 national tests showed that pupils had made good progress, particularly in mathematics. However, information provided by the school indicates that in 2008 standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are still well below average. The main stumbling block for the pupils is their writing; in particular, they have problems with some basic technical skills. Spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and the ability to form letters correctly with joined-up script and to use a pen are less than they should be. The school recognises this and has taken steps to improve in this area. These steps are beginning to have an effect on the younger children, and this is reflected in the higher standards in writing seen at the end of Key Stage 1 this year. However, their impact on the writing in Key Stage 2 is not yet evident. Nonetheless, given the pupils' starting points, given that many of them join the school at different times, and given the quite troubled backgrounds of some, this represents satisfactory achievement overall. Furthermore, the school's own assessment information indicates that overall achievement is steadily improving.

Many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well. Pupils in the additional resource centre, for example, are integrated into mainstream classes when they are ready and reach standards that are in line with the school's expectations. One of their parents wrote, 'I am delighted with his personal and academic progress ...much of this is due to the teachers, the support workers and the environment'. Other pupils who need extra support make satisfactory or better progress because of the high level of attention they receive in class and the additional work they do out of the classroom in small groups.

Pupils' personal development is good. A parent summed it up accurately by saying her son had become 'a well rounded and confident boy'. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, apart from the shortcomings in their writing skills; those in Year 6 are looking forward to secondary school and some are already talking about what they want to study at college. Pupils enjoy school, particularly playing with their friends. They make healthy choices about what to eat and drink, and a good number participate in extra-curricular sporting activities. They feel safe at school. Racism and bullying are rare. When a child is bullied they tell a member of staff and more often than not the matter is resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Pupils behave well in lessons and at play. Attendance, however, though improving, is well below average.

The school's achievement is due to the commitment and dedication of the staff. They take great care of their pupils, who agree that the teachers are the best thing about the school. New pupils, such as those transferring after a recent school closure, settle in quickly because of the care staff take to help them. Although pupils say that occasionally lessons are boring or that they have to repeat work which they feel they have mastered, teaching overall is good. Lessons are well planned and staff provide a lot of support for individuals. Relationships are very good; teachers use praise regularly to encourage pupils to do their best. The curriculum is rich and varied and gives pupils many opportunities to develop personally as well as academically. A

music concert during the inspection gave all pupils, including those in the additional resource centre, the chance to perform in public, and some visibly grew in confidence as a result. One class recalls with excitement a project when, with the assistance of a Chinese artist, they made an enormous dragon and danced in the city centre for the Chinese New Year celebrations, thereby learning about a different culture and developing useful skills such as teamworking. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors and a number of popular after-school activities. It has been adjusted recently to improve pupils' skills in English but is not yet fully effective in raising standards across the whole school.

Pupils' progress is assessed systematically and recorded in detail. The information is used to set targets for individuals, to monitor their progress and to take action when someone is underachieving. Pupils are given targets to improve their work; at times these are not fully understood by the pupils and for some they do not identify the need for better basic writing skills.

The school's leadership has brought about clear improvements since the last inspection, which raised some important concerns. There is now a strong emphasis on improving pupils' basic skills. Governors are far better informed about pupils' achievement and more able to challenge the school. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Detailed assessments of pupils' work and regular observations of teaching provide managers with a clear view of where improvements are needed. The headteacher recognises two ways in which the school could further its drive to raise standards. First, while subjects are well led by enthusiastic teams, these do not monitor pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Second, although the school sets achievable targets for pupils' attainment, in the past they have not been particularly ambitious; those set last year, for example, were far exceeded by what the pupils actually achieved. Targets from now on are set to be far more demanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents have recognised clear improvements in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The curriculum places more emphasis on literacy. Leadership is more effective as the leader now teaches in that area of the school, and this has contributed to the good progress children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing, especially their basic skills.
- Improve pupils' attendance.
- Ensure that targets for individual pupils and for the whole school contribute more to raising standards.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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 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	3
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

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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kenton Bar Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3YF

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly into your school. I enjoyed watching you in lessons, at the concert, and at play; talking about your school with you and your teachers; and looking at your work. Now I want to share with you what I thought.

Kenton Bar is a good school. Here are some of the many things I liked about it.

- You told me you like coming to school and feel safe there.
- You appreciate the opportunities you are given to perform in public and be creative; for example, you enjoyed participating in the concert while I was there and many of you liked making the Chinese dragon and dancing in the city centre earlier this year.
- You know how important it is to eat healthily and take exercise.
- Your behaviour is good. You behave very well in class and in the playground. Whenever I went through a door one of you stood aside or offered to hold the door open for me; parents confirmed this happens when they are in the school too. This is very good manners and you should be proud of this.
- Your teachers and other staff take good care of you. They work very hard to make sure you are happy and help you with your work. Those of you who joined the school recently have been helped to settle in quickly.
- Many of you are very grown up and help with the running of the school; the school council, for instance, has done valuable work such as helping to select new staff for the school. Others help out by selling fruit at play time.
- You are self-assured when speaking with adults. The Year 6 pupils I met are confidently looking forward to secondary school.

I think you and your teachers could make the school better and this is what I would like to happen now.

- Although you have all worked hard to improve your writing I think it could be better. I have asked your teachers to help you with this.
- You all have targets for improving your work, and the teachers have them too. I have asked the staff to see if they can make sure these targets improve the quality of your work as much as possible. You can help by trying your best to reach your targets as quickly as you can.
- Some of you do not attend school as much as you should. You can all help here by trying to get into school every day.

You are lucky to go to such a caring school. Thank you again for helping me with the inspection. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Derek Neil

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools