

Percy Main Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108572
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	309725
Inspection dates	1–2 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster 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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jac Graham
Headteacher	Mr John Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Nelson Terrace North Shields Tyne and Wear NE29 6JA
Telephone number	0191 2006343
Fax number	0191 2006344

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Percy Main Primary School is an average sized primary school situated on the edge of North Shields close to the River Tyne. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average, reflecting the high levels of economic and social disadvantage within the community. There are very few pupils from a minority ethnic background or who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and those who have a statement of special educational need is higher than that found nationally. The school has achieved the Activemark Award in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Percy Main Primary School is a good school which makes a significant difference to the lives of its pupils. Effective leadership and management, good teaching and high levels of care and support result in pupils achieving well in their time in school.

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Since his appointment in September 2007, he has gained the confidence and respect of the whole school community. He is highly committed to ensuring that pupils achieve the best possible education and care. As one parent states, 'the new headteacher is a breath of fresh air to our school taking into account everyone's views. He has the children's best interests at heart'.

Standards are broadly average but have fluctuated in recent years. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 were well below average whilst above average at the end of Year 6. The inconsistency partly reflects turbulence in staffing at Key Stage 1. There are signs that standards are now beginning to rise at Key Stage 1. Overall, from starting in the Nursery to leaving Year 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well but the rate of progress varies throughout the school. The vast majority of children enter the school with skills and abilities which are much lower than those typical of their age. The good provision in the Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their learning, especially in their ability to get on with others. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 but the rate of progress accelerates at Key Stage 2 because of good, focused teaching, especially in mathematics.

Pupils say they enjoy school because teachers make learning interesting and enable them to succeed. Teachers ensure that pupils know exactly what they are going to learn in each lesson and in the best lessons pupils know how their success will be measured. However, individual learning targets are not always closely matched to the needs of individual pupils and although teachers' marking is rigorous, it does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well. There is a strong focus on developing basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and this is enhanced by the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) but the curriculum is not as rich or creative as it could be. Parents are helped to understand the work their children do in school through opportunities for family learning.

The school's very good care and support for pupils nurtures pupils' good personal development. Pupils behave very well and show positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to come to school and it provides them with an 'oasis of calm'. They know they can turn to any member of staff for help, but particularly the learning mentor and coordinator for special educational needs. Their support is greatly appreciated by both pupils and parents. As one parent says, 'Percy Main School is working very well with my children. They are very happy and feel secure in the school. The staff are very helpful and are very easy to interact with.'

The headteacher has established a strong and effective leadership team, supported by well-motivated and highly committed staff. A strong sense of teamwork ensures that all members of staff work closely and effectively together to bring about improvement. Leadership roles have been reviewed and subject leaders are developing their roles well, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning in their subjects. The governors are very supportive and involved closely in the work of the school. Roles link governors to subjects of the curriculum and regular visits ensure that they are highly knowledgeable about the work of the school and

are able to challenge its work effectively. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage offers children a good start to their education. Relationships between adults and children are very positive and this enables children to settle well and develop their confidence and self-esteem. Most children enter the Nursery with very limited skills, particularly in personal and social development and language development. Staff prioritise these aspects and children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development, although there are still weaknesses in communication and language skills by the end of the Reception year. This is evident from the efficient tracking systems in place and through detailed observations carried out by all staff. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and there is an appropriate balance of adult directed and child initiated activities. Teaching is good and good use is made of the outdoor environment to stimulate children's learning further, for example, when children in Reception followed clues to find the monster who featured in the story they had listened to. The behaviour of children is very good and they clearly feel safe and secure in the warm, caring environment provided for them. Children in the Nursery show good levels of independence when choosing their own activities and are able to sustain concentration over a significant period of time.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that children know what they have to do to improve their work.
- Establish a more diverse and rich curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress overall from their starting points but the rate of progress is variable across the school. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, but the rate of progress increases in Key Stage 2. This is partly because literacy and numeracy skills improve more rapidly once pupils' understanding of basic concepts has been established. By the time pupils leave school in Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. However, standards rose to above average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007 and were well above average in mathematics because of the very effective booster classes provided for pupils and the good quality of teaching. Standards at Key Stage 1 have been below average over time but dipped to well below average in 2007, partly due to staffing turbulence. This has now been addressed and very effective additional teaching support has been provided in Key Stage 1, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' work shows that standards are now beginning to rise in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the school make good progress because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Although cultural development is good overall, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to appreciate the multi-cultural world about them.

Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory; pupils have adequate awareness of religious aspects through assemblies and the curriculum but do not have enough opportunities for reflection. Sound basic skills and good social and moral development mean that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

Pupils are friendly, kind and helpful. They are proud of their school, carry out responsibilities earnestly and watch out for the safety of others. Older pupils readily help, for instance, if a younger one falls in the playground. They learn respect from their teachers; a good example was when Year 6 pupils acknowledged other pupils' views in a debate. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils know that any misbehaviour is swiftly dealt with by teachers. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and this is endorsed by parents. In lessons, pupils concentrate hard, cooperate well in groups and are self-reliant when working on their own. Although the school makes every effort to promote healthy lifestyles, many pupils do not tend to choose the healthier options at lunchtime. A small number of pupils participate well in sports activities provided after school. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through close links with the local church and through working on a project linked to the building of the new Tyne Tunnel.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has a highly motivated and committed teaching staff and this is reflected in good quality teaching. Effective class management is a strong feature throughout the school and pupils respond well by being well behaved, concentrating hard and consequently they enjoy their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they work hard to promote important basic skills. Pupils are told clearly what they will be expected to learn and in the best lessons know how their success will be measured. However, pupils do not always receive sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. There are good opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills through questioning, talk partners and opportunities for debate and this is one reason why pupils make good progress. Teachers understand that pupils need to verbalise their thoughts and views before commencing their writing or recording. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is having a positive impact on promoting the progress of pupils and engages them in their learning. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils show respect to staff and to one another. Teaching assistants provide good, sensitive support for pupils, particularly those who need extra help, enabling them to participate fully in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The clear focus on basic skills enables pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills methodically. Some teachers are creative in their approach and provide interesting topics, such as the Spanish Armada, that motivate pupils, broaden their knowledge across several subjects and enrich their vocabulary. Such activity is not a regular part of all teachers' planning but the range of interesting visits, visitors and activities helps to broaden pupils' experiences. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language, through support in class or targeted group work. More able pupils benefit from extra opportunities in weekend workshops,

for example, but there is not always sufficient challenge for them in some lessons. Provision for pupils' personal and social education is good, especially for the more vulnerable pupils. There are valuable relationships with the local secondary school including providing pupils in Key Stage 2 with French lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed using their language skills in a French café during the inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Parents rightly praise the concern, support and commitment that staff show to all pupils, but especially those with specific academic, emotional or behavioural needs. Pupils feel secure and safe in the knowledge that staff, particularly the learning mentor, will strive to resolve any difficult issue. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current requirements. Links with external agencies are very effective at supporting vulnerable pupils particularly in areas such as speech therapy.

The school has recently established a good system for checking pupils' progress. This enables teachers to identify pupils who may be underachieving and to group pupils according to their needs. Pupils have termly goals that guide learning in literacy and numeracy, but do not have enough individual guidance so that they know clearly how to improve their work in the short term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and contribute significantly to the good progress made by the pupils. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and all members of the school community recognise his commitment to improving the school to gain the best possible outcomes for pupils. The senior management team are relatively new to their posts, but they are keen to develop their roles and contribute to improvements in the school. The school's processes for evaluating its strengths and weaknesses are effective and accurate. The process successfully involves the staff and governors and seeks and values the views of parents and pupils. Staff at all levels work very well as a team, helping pupils not only to achieve but also to enjoy school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide the headteacher with a good balance of support and challenge. Their role is enhanced because of the regular visits to school which enables them to monitor and evaluate the work of the school more effectively.

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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?	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 April 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Percy Main Primary School, North Tyneside, NE29 6JA

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when Mr Scott and I visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was a pleasure to meet you and your teachers and to have the opportunity to see all that you do. Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires and tell them we took all their views into account. You and your parents told us that Percy Main is a good school and we agree.

We were very impressed with the way your headteacher, staff and governors do all they can to help you make good progress. They look after you very well and you told us you can always go to any member of staff if you have a concern or worry. We were also impressed with your good behaviour and your enthusiasm for learning. You look after one another very well. We think you are very friendly and have very good manners. You are clearly very proud of your school and you should be. You make good progress in your learning because of the good teaching you receive. Your lessons are interesting and your teachers plan lessons carefully to make sure you succeed. However, we have asked them to make sure that your individual learning targets are more helpful to you and that their marking of your work suggests ways to improve your work.

You are learning a great deal about reading, writing and mathematics. The teachers are using the interactive whiteboards really well to help you to learn even more. However, we think the curriculum could be even more fun and exciting in all subjects so we have asked the staff to find more ways of helping you to become even more creative in your learning. Most of you make good progress during your time in school. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6 most of you do as well in the tests as other pupils in the country and sometimes even better. However, Year 2 pupils have not always made as much progress as they could so we have asked the school to help the younger children to learn even more. You can help by continuing to work hard. Although your school does much to encourage you to be healthy, not everyone makes healthy choices of food, particularly in packed lunches. Perhaps you could try to eat more healthily and take lots of exercise and this will help you to learn even better.

Good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Christine Inkster HMI