

Biddick Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108816
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	309806
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Townsend
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Stothard
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	Kirkham Biddick Village Washington Tyne and Wear NE38 7HQ
Telephone number	0191 2193675
Fax number	000000

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and is situated in an urban community where the number of adults with higher education is about half the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few come from minority ethnic groups and a very small number speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Skills on entry to the school are below those which are typical of three-year-olds, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. Over the past four years, the school cohort has changed and many pupils have joined the school at times other than the usual start in the Nursery class. This is due to local authority reorganisation and the closure of nearby schools. Since the last inspection the school has opened a nursery on site. Reception and Nursery classes now operate as a Foundation Stage unit. There is a privately run breakfast club and after school club held on the school premises.

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. It has outstanding features in the care, guidance and support it offers to pupils. Over the past two years standards have risen. The improvements are due to the clear leadership of the headteacher and the strong leadership team's determination to raise standards. Parents wholeheartedly appreciate the work of the school and a significant number write positive comments such as, 'Biddick is a wonderful school and I am proud to tell people that my child attends there'.

Pupils' personal development is good. Relationships are very good and pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They are keen to take on responsibility and contribute well to their school community. Pupils' ideas are listened to and acted upon through the school council. They show good levels of responsibility and truly value and care for each other. The strong attention given to personal, social and health education ensures pupils know exactly how to keep healthy and stay safe.

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of learning. When children start school, their level of development is below that which is typical for this age group. They make good progress throughout the school, achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The results of national assessments and tests for seven and eleven-year-olds show that standards are rising. However, boys tend to achieve better than girls in mathematics and girls achieve better than boys in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress. Those who come from minority ethnic groups achieve particularly well.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers track pupils' learning with detailed precision and set learning tasks to match the ability and learning needs of individuals. Relationships are excellent and lessons are fun, therefore pupils work hard and enjoy new learning. A particularly good feature of teaching is the way teachers use real life experiences in their lessons to help make learning more meaningful for pupils. The curriculum is good and strikes a suitable balance between promoting pupils' personal development and encouraging their academic progress. Planning takes particularly good account of individual needs and is well adjusted to match the ability range in classes. The school provides outstanding levels of care and pupils work in an environment where they feel safe, valued and supported. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but pupils have insufficient knowledge and understanding of the cultures that make up modern British society.

The headteacher, with the enthusiastic support of the management team, makes a major contribution to the school's success. Good leadership and management, in which all teachers have a part to play, ensure that staff are totally committed to raising standards and developing the school. The school knows its strengths and is well focused on making the right improvements. There have been extensive improvements since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to further improve. Governors are well informed and well involved in the life of the school. They are very supportive in helping the school move forward. With good provision and good outcomes, the school offers good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Adults plan a good range of interesting activities, both indoors and outside, which captivate children's interests and motivate them to learn. Teaching is good because adults interact sensitively with children while they are playing, encouraging them to talk and extend their ideas. Consequently, children show increasing levels of confidence, enjoy learning and make good progress. The learning environment in which children play and learn is caring, safe and stimulating. The excellent induction procedures and home visits ensure that staff know each child well. Good assessment procedures help teachers plan activities that take good account of children's prior experiences and individual learning needs. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective adult support available. Leadership and management are good and ensure that adults are well trained to plan and deliver a stimulating curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Narrow the gap between girls' and boys' achievements in English and mathematics for the current Year 5 and Year 6 in order to raise standards.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures in British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. When they start school in the Nursery, the level of children's development varies from year to year. It is usually below that which is typical for their age, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and early literacy skills. The children make good progress and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, many, but not all, attain the level of development expected for their age. The good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and standards by the end of Year 2 are average. The school's results in national assessments for the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006 and 2007 show rising standards and girls reached higher standards than boys. The results in the 2006 national tests for Year 6 pupils were above average and show a clear upward trend which has continued in 2007. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress. Those who come from minority ethnic groups achieve particularly well. Boys tend to make better progress than girls in mathematics and girls achieve better than boys in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. There are some outstanding features. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 they are confident and articulate individuals who show empathy and concern for others. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is good and above the national average. Pupils are proud of their school and of its sporting achievements and other awards. They have a good sense of belonging to the school community and willingly volunteer their free time to help with its smooth running, by being prefects and buddies to younger children. Older pupils run a healthy tuck shop. Many pupils take part in physical activity during and after school time. They make sensible choices about their diet. Pupils know their views are valued and the school council is well involved in decision making. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils confirm they feel safe

because they know that staff support and care for them exceptionally well. Pupils willingly support local and national charities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and reflects the ethos of a caring and supportive school. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They show good respect for themselves and value the opinions of others. Cultural development is enhanced through the curriculum, however, pupils have too little knowledge and understanding about the multicultural world in which we live.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' planning is thorough and takes careful account of pupils' previous learning, so that work set provides challenge and enjoyment for all groups of pupils. Relationships are very good and, as a result, pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. Teachers create a strong feeling of security for pupils who willingly respond with confidence to challenging questions, giving good support to each other and working hard to meet the objectives that are set for them. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to provide interesting and exciting learning experiences. Praise is well used across the school and this increases pupils' motivation. The quality of marking in a minority of pupils' books, at Key Stage 2, is variable and does not always show them what to do to improve their work. Where the teaching is particularly strong, teachers link new learning to real life experiences and this makes learning very meaningful for pupils. Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed and well briefed to ensure that vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are provided with tasks which cater well for their individual needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It includes all subjects in the National Curriculum and offers a wide range of well-planned activities. It strikes a good balance between promoting pupils' personal development and encouraging their academic progress. The school adapts the curriculum to respond to pupils' needs, as at the beginning of Key Stage 1 where pupils continue to work where necessary within the Early Year's curriculum to meet Foundation Stage goals. Every opportunity is taken to enhance what is done in the classroom and a varied programme of educational visits and visitors to school is complemented by a wide range of popular extra-curricular activities, including a new Eco Club. The noteworthy provision for gymnastics for all pupils helps improve self-confidence and self-esteem. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used widely by pupils and they visit the City Learning Centre for access to more advanced equipment and software. There are also valuable links with the local specialist sports college which further enhances physical activity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is outstanding. Expectations for the behaviour and development of pupils are set very high within a caring climate in which all feel valued and supported. Excellent induction procedures ensure that the strengths and needs of all pupils are identified and catered for in the Foundation Stage and beyond. Throughout the school, arrangements for assessing and analysing pupils' progress are very well

established, enabling detailed tracking of their performance. This makes sure that teachers plan appropriate work and consequently standards are rising. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because of the excellent learning support and the close links with outside agencies. There is a good number of well-trained support staff so that, as well as their teachers, pupils always have an adult to turn to. Child protection procedures are clearly set out and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Pupils confirm that they have ample opportunities to consider and discuss issues relating to staying healthy and safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides thoughtful direction for the work of the school within which, the inclusion of all pupils is central to its vision. She has managed the school well during a period when the school received many new pupils and through a number of staff changes and absences. The headteacher and the leadership team work closely together to ensure high quality assessment procedures. Assessment information is analysed fully so that pupils' learning can be tracked and monitored and any problems identified quickly. As a result of the good use made by the school of challenging targets, standards are rising. The school knows its strengths well and has identified the right priorities for improvement. All teachers play a part in leading developments in aspects of the school's work. Training has been successful in helping subject managers to give a clear lead for raising standards. Issues from the last inspection have been tackled and improved. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Governance is good. Governors are well informed and well involved in the life of the school. They support the school well through new initiatives. They evaluate the work of the school and show a good awareness of the standards and progress that the pupils make.

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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	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	1

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

22 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Biddick Primary School, Sunderland, NE38 7HQ

Thank you for making me very welcome when I recently visited your school with another inspector to find out how well you are all doing. Yours is a good school. The teachers think very highly of you and really care about your education and personal development. I know you love school because you have made so many good friends. Your attendance is good and I am sure 'Spike' will be very proud of you.

We were very impressed with your good manners and the friendly and courteous way you talked with adults and with each other. It was enjoyable watching you working out hard problems in lessons and trying your very best. Standards are improving in your school and will continue to do so if you keep this up. The school has explained to us that, in Years 5 and 6, girls do better than boys in English and boys do better than girls in mathematics. We have asked the school to look into this very carefully. Those of you in these classes must work extra hard, especially in these two very important subjects. We also think you could learn a little more about the different cultures that are a part of Britain today.

On behalf of the inspectors I wish you good luck for your future and remember, the harder you work, the better your chances will be in life.

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector