

High Clarence Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111523
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	310617
Inspection date	7 February 2008
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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Ann McCoy
Headteacher	Mrs Jean Orridge
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2005
School address	Port Clarence Road Middlesbrough TS2 1SY
Telephone number	01642 561237
Fax number	01642 566481

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

This inspection carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards in English with emphasis on reading at KS1, writing and speaking and listening skills throughout the school
- the differences in attainment between boys and girls
- the effectiveness of sharing leadership responsibilities among key staff.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, the school's self-evaluation and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils (including how pupils interact with each other and their response to what is provided for them), parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is small when compared with other primary schools nationally and is set in an area where social disadvantage is high. Geographically, it is situated in a comparatively isolated area within the local authority. More than half the pupils claim a free school meal which is almost four times more than the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. An above average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 that shows outstanding levels of care for its pupils. This is due to the exceptional leadership of the headteacher who works relentlessly to improve academic and personal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils are welcoming and friendly and show good levels of care for each other. The school plays a central role in the community and pupils regularly invite parents and friends to their musical productions. Apart from the Nativity play, harvest celebrations and Easter events, parents thoroughly enjoy seeing their children perform in annual leavers' productions including 'Joseph'. The school works exceptionally hard to ensure pupils arrive on time and attend regularly. Attendance has improved and is now average and punctuality is much better. More than half the pupil population have a nourishing start to their school day by attending the enticing breakfast club that has food donated by a local bread company. 'The Wake and Shake Up' session is a strong incentive to arrive on time and is attended by pupils and all staff, including kitchen staff. Parents are wholeheartedly delighted with the school and this is evident by the high number of returned questionnaires and the many positive comments. For example one parent, who speaks for many wrote, 'Everyone works very hard and good teaching matches children's needs.' This comment is certainly accurate and is one of the main reasons why pupils make good progress.

Achievement for pupils of all abilities is good because teachers have high expectations and use their in-depth knowledge about every single pupil to ensure no one gets left behind. The organisation of mixed-age classes also makes a positive contribution to pupils' good progress as it leads to pupils being fully challenged in lessons as they work alongside older and younger pupils of similar ability. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 where standards, despite being below average, are improving. New systems for teaching children to recognise letters and sounds are raising standards, especially in reading. Good progress is sustained in Key Stage 2 where pupils become increasingly responsible for their own work. They have very clear aims and know exactly what they have to do to make their work better. Standards, for pupils in Year 6, have improved since the last inspection and are broadly average. The sudden dip in English in the 2007 national tests was due to an unexpected influx of pupils into Year 6 who did not speak English. Nevertheless, these pupils achieved well. Overall, pupils achieve best in mathematics and science with more than a third reaching the higher level (Level 5) in the tests. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are improving. This is because teachers ensure pupils learn and use new vocabulary in lessons. However, they do not achieve as well in imaginative writing as they do in other subjects. The school is very vigilant in the way it tracks the progress of all pupils. School data shows that each boy and girl progresses according to the best of their ability and the current Year 6 cohort is expected to achieve well. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well due to strong adult support.

Pupils value their education and know they are truly cared for in the school. In turn they show good care for each other as was seen in the attention given to a pupil who fell over in the playground. A kindly spirit permeates all aspects of school life and has a significant impact on pupils' good personal development and spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They show increasing confidence when talking with adults. They thoroughly enjoy the healthy school lunch and are eager to receive awards for trying different food, or for eating from the salad bar. After-school sports clubs are popular and through strong links with the local football club, parents are expected to attend too. This helps parents and

pupils to keep fit and have fun together through physical activity. Behaviour is good and pupils say the school rules are very fair. The school council has a strong voice and has brought about improvements including play equipment at lunchtime and the introduction of buddies in the playground so that everyone has a friend to play with.

Pupils learn successfully because teaching is good. Lessons are interesting and teachers explain clearly so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers mark books very well and this helps pupils to recognise where they are improving and what they need to do next to get even better. In classes, pupils are very well supported by good teaching assistants. They know that once they raise a query, an adult will come to their aid immediately. This is one of the reasons why pupils love their school and enjoy learning. Pupils effectively learn new skills during lessons in the new information and communication technology suite and apply these confidently in other subjects. Pupils enjoy the way the curriculum is taught. Through relevant project work, knowledge in one subject supports new learning in another. For example, in geography pupils find out about different types of houses in the area and use their design and technology skills to construct them. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about visitors to the school and school outings which widen their horizons. However, they have limited knowledge about the multicultural world in which they live.

Pupils receive very high levels of care because systems and procedures to protect and safeguard them are in place. Staff are very vigilant and well informed about protecting children. Pupils say they have plenty of friends and they can speak with confidence to any member of staff should they need to.

The school is exceptionally well led by a strong headteacher who has all members of staff fully on board. The school is distributing leadership and management responsibilities and staff are well involved in further training and development towards this end. Good teamwork pervades throughout and everyone works together to improve learning for all pupils. The school has detailed and accurate systems in place to inform staff about the progress of every pupil. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and helps to produce comprehensive action plans that are very relevant to the needs of the school. The increased emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and the improvement to standards in reading, are a direct result of rigorous self-review. Governors play a full and active part in the school's strategic leadership. They both question and support its work well. The school is well placed to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Many parents confirm that their children settle well because staff are caring and sensitive. Children clearly enjoy coming to the Nursery and Reception classes. When children start school, their skills and abilities are much lower than is typical for their age. They have limited communication skills. They generally lack confidence. Teaching is good and enables children to make good progress although they do not reach the levels expected by the end of the Reception in all six areas of learning. The good curriculum gives specific emphasis to personal development, communication, language and literacy and early mathematics. There is a good balance between activities that are directed by adults and those from which children can choose. Children learn well through activities they choose for themselves, because staff interact well and engage children in good learning activity. The emphasis on early sound and letter recognition is improving children's interest in early reading and writing. Leadership and management are good and the school is very clear about what is done well in the Foundation Stage and the actions required to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing, especially in pupils' ability to write imaginatively, throughout the school.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to gain a better insight into the multicultural society in which they live.

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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	1

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?	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	1
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

7 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Clarence Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS2 1SY

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you before and after lunch. Please thank your parents for the very interesting comments they made about your school.

I can see that you work very hard and that you are very proud of your achievements. You certainly take good notice of the 'wishes' you have in your books. That is why your work is getting better and standards are improving in your school. I know you really enjoy your time at school. Those I spoke to talked very clearly about the good education you receive and they are right because you make such good progress. You are very enthusiastic about the visitors who come to work with you and the places you visit out of school, which help with your learning. The school council has worked hard to get new playground equipment for you. Buddies are very kind to you all at playtimes.

The care and guidance you receive is outstanding. You in turn show kindness to your friends in classes and in the playground. You told me that there is always someone to talk to should you need help in any way. Teachers and assistants are always there to help you if you get stuck with your work. Your work is marked so well that you know exactly what you need to next think about.

You achieve particularly well in mathematics and science. I have asked the school to think of ways to help you achieve better in writing. You in turn can try even harder in this subject. You seem to know many things about the area in which you live. The school is now going to expand your knowledge so you find out about the multicultural society in which you live. I am sure you will do your best here too.

I hope you continue to do well in school and that you continue to work hard when you go to secondary school.

Yours sincerely

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector