

# South Pelaw Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114015
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311449
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Inkster HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Barry Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Dorothy Hales
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Hilda Park Chester le Street County Durham DH2 2JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3884820
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 3881483

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

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

The inspection was a reduced tariff inspection. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress and achievement of all pupils; the quality of teaching and learning; the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels to support improvement; and how well the school uses assessment to help pupils improve. Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work, assessment information, school documents, responses by parents to the inspection questionnaire, and holding discussions with the headteacher, teachers, pupils and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as made in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of the town of Chester-le-Street. It is smaller than average size. There are approximately 119 pupils on roll some of whom travel from outlying areas. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average, but is increasing. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average and there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has gained several awards including the Healthy School Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark 3, Impetus Award and the local authority Anti-Bullying Accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspection confirms the school's own self-evaluation that this is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils receive exceptional care, guidance and support and a stimulating and interesting curriculum. The curriculum is fully inclusive allowing all pupils to make good progress. It is considerably enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are over-subscribed and which pupils and parents appreciate very much. The multicultural education provided contributes very well to pupils' understanding of and respect for other faiths and cultures. As a result, their personal development is outstanding and this is evident in their very good behaviour and their very good attitudes to work. Pupil's spiritual development is greatly enriched through excellent assemblies which include opportunities for prayer and reflection. Pupils make a significant contribution to the community through their work as school councillors and 'minibuds'. They know their voices are heard and take their responsibilities very seriously, for example, when they were involved in interviewing candidates for the position of headteacher. The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely happy with the school. One parent says 'it is obvious that children are at the heart of the school' and another states 'it has been amazing to watch my child grow in his skills and confidence'.

Overall, achievement is good. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of children their age. They make good progress in the Reception classes and Key Stage 1 and leave Year 2 with above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, standards have gradually declined in all of these subjects over the past five years, although they are still above the national average. In writing, while standards are above average, the school recognises that not all pupils attain the high levels of which they are capable because they sometimes struggle when asked to write stories. Consequently, this is the school's main priority at the moment, and measures to improve pupils' writing are beginning to bear fruit, particularly in respect of boys' writing. Pupils now become excited when they are asked to write because resources are being used effectively to promote interest and enthusiasm. This is particularly the case for boys. Boys achieved less well than girls in reading, writing and mathematics in 2007. However, the school has taken effective action to address this and the gap has narrowed as evidenced by the provisional 2008 results. These results have therefore shown a slight upturn overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are more able, make good progress because of the good targeted support they receive.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall enabling pupils to make good progress. High standards of classroom management ensure that lessons are calm and purposeful. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan lessons which suit the needs of the pupils well. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled at developing pupils' confidence and fostering a desire to learn. Pupils have good individual learning targets and they know exactly what they have to do to improve. The staff ensure that pupils know what they are to learn and how they can show their achievement. Pupils are able to assess for themselves what they have achieved and can indicate how well they have understood by using a 'traffic lights' system. Marking is conscientious, indicating where pupils have achieved well and often suggesting ways in which work can be improved. Teachers use good, probing questions to stimulate pupils' thinking skills and every opportunity is taken to promote speaking and listening skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan carefully together for the differing abilities in each year group. However, occasionally in some lessons pupils sit for too long on the carpet and become

restless as they find it difficult to concentrate for that length of time. Pupils are less engaged in their learning on these occasions.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is held in very high regard by the whole school community. Parents acknowledge that she is highly dedicated and has a very caring and compassionate manner. They appreciate her efforts in creating a warm and welcoming environment for pupils and parents. There is very good teamwork amongst the staff. They are also highly committed and dedicated to improving the quality of education for pupils. The school listens carefully to the views of pupils and parents. Pupils know they have an influence through the school council and speak with enthusiasm about the changes the school has made in response to their suggestions. For example, during lunchtimes pupils now can choose whom they sit next to and they are involved in designing the school play areas. The senior leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their effective checking and analysing and they constantly strive to improve. However, longer term strategic management and the focus on future planning is not as refined as it could be. In addition, the role of the subject leader is insufficiently developed to ensure that all subject leaders are able to contribute effectively towards improvements in the school. Governors are committed and offer good support and challenge to school leaders. They are keen to ensure that resources are managed effectively in order to maintain a good quality of education for pupils. The school gives good value for money. Governor visits ensure that they are well informed about developments within the school. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well, particularly in respect of the provision of resources for information and communication technology (ICT), the use of literacy skills in science and the way in which governors now monitor health and safety issues within the school. The leadership team's proven effectiveness in bringing about improvements since the last inspection demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve even further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

All staff provide a very caring, learning environment enabling children to settle well to school routines and develop positive relationships with each other and all adults. Good teaching and learning ensure that the children enjoy coming to school and that they make good progress in all six of the foundation stage areas of learning. Pupils have limited skills in communication, language and literacy and in their personal and social development when they enter the school, but they make particularly good progress, therefore their skills in these two areas are slightly above average when they move into Year 1. This is because staff focus on developing these skills, for example through encouraging children to work independently and through good opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills. The staff know children very well and make detailed observations and assessments of their achievements. The curriculum is broad and stimulating and there are a wide variety of activities on offer, both indoors and outdoors which enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and there is very effective teamwork among staff which creates a happy and harmonious atmosphere for children.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop strategic planning and subject leadership to support further and sustained improvement.
- Continue to improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics.



## 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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Pelaw Infant School, Durham, DH2 2JT

Thank you very much for your help when Mrs Wright and I visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons and especially when we spoke to a group of pupils at lunchtime. I think your school is a good school with some outstanding areas.

These are some of the best things I found:

- the curriculum is excellent and there are some really interesting things for you to do
- the teachers look after you extremely well and help you to understand clearly what you have to do to improve
- you make good progress in your work and you all try very hard to do your best
- your behaviour is very good and you work hard to help others
- the school listens carefully to what you say and makes changes to improve the school as a result
- your headteacher and all the other people who help run your school, are working very hard to make sure that you receive a good education.

This is what I think could be improved.

- All the managers and leaders work very hard to make sure you get the help each one of you needs to improve your work and they care about all of you very much. However, we have asked them to make sure that they use their long term plans even better and that all subject leaders develop their role even further.
- Also, we have asked them to make sure that you all continue to improve your work in all subjects so that you learn as much as you possibly can.

You can help by continuing to work hard, particularly in your writing and make sure you meet your targets, which you all know so well.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful during our visit. I wish you all good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster HMI