

Durham Newton Hall Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114134
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311497
Inspection date	14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janette Barren
Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Langley Road Newton Hall Durham County Durham DH1 5LP
Telephone number	0191 3861203
Fax number	0191 3861203

Age group	4-7
Inspection date	14 May 2008
Inspection number	311497

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

- how good are pupils' progress and achievement?
- is there evidence to confirm that pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding?
- is there sufficient evidence to support the view that care, guidance and support are outstanding?
- how good is the capacity to improve further?

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons, the dining area and the playground. Formal discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, governors and members of the school council. Parents' responses to the questionnaire were analysed and other school documents, including the school's self-evaluation form, were scrutinised.

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 given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those whose first language is not English is higher than in many schools. Of these pupils a small number are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Newton Hall Infants is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the care, support and guidance the school provides are outstanding. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the way the school looks after their children and helps them to develop into confident children who are very eager to learn.

Pupils enjoy school a great deal. Very good relationships with adults and the extra care that adults take to make sure that children are happy help them to feel very safe and secure in school. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Behaviour is very good and pupils are extremely sensitive towards each others' needs. School council members take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy playing with children at playtimes, especially those who are looking for a playmate. They say, 'Children don't get unhappy. Everybody looks after each other'. Pupils make the most of the play equipment to enjoy plenty of physical activity at playtimes and many pupils enjoy the extra sporting activities the school offers. Pupils understand very clearly that activity and healthy eating are really important. Pupils do a great deal for their own and the wider community. The school council has helped to improve the playground. On the suggestion of one pupil, the whole school has started to recycle waste with great enthusiasm. Pupils raise funds for the school and charities and they enjoy taking food parcels to elderly people in the local area at Harvest Festival time. Pupils develop a good awareness of people from different backgrounds and cultures. They like writing to children of their own age in other countries such as Italy and parts of Africa, and they recall meeting adults from different faiths and backgrounds in school. The school is currently developing the already effective programme of personal, social and health education to take even more account of pupils' emotional needs.

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are well above average. Results in national assessments for Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have been significantly above average for the past five years and an above average proportion of pupils reach the higher level (Level 3). When children start Year 1 many have exceeded the learning goals expected for their age. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because teaching is consistently good across the school. A carefully planned curriculum is well focused on developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). A good range of visits and visitors, stimulating classrooms and lessons all help pupils to achieve well. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear and pupils are encouraged to think for themselves about how well they have done and what to do to improve. Teachers give plenty of useful guidance on how to improve work. Some of the targets given to individual pupils are not referred to often enough to help pupils to maintain a focus on what they need to do to improve. Teachers know the pupils well. A recently improved system to track pupils' progress is helping to ensure that teaching is tailored closely to individual needs and provides the right level of challenge and support. The first of many things that pupils say they like about school is the 'hard work' they do in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together and with other agencies to ensure that pupils who are learning English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Pupils' good standards in ICT, literacy and numeracy, and their developing confidence as learners prepare them well for junior school. The excellent partnership with the nearby junior school helps prepare pupils to move happily from one school to the next

The headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors, provide very strong leadership and clear purpose to the work of the school. High expectations and challenging targets are set for staff and pupils. Through effective teamwork, the school succeeds in providing a happy and highly supportive environment where every child, whatever their circumstances, ability or background, achieves well in their personal development and learning. Self-evaluation informs the school's priorities for improvement accurately. Monitoring of the school's work is secure and carried out mainly by senior leaders. Recent changes in staffing mean that some subject leaders have not yet developed the monitoring and evaluation skills needed to contribute fully to the process of self-evaluation and school improvement. Governors are very supportive. They visit the school regularly and see its work first hand. They contribute to school self-evaluation, monitor the budget closely and hold the school to account.

The school's good capacity to improve is demonstrated in the maintenance of good achievement and standards since the last inspection and effective improvements made, for example, to the use of the tracking system to support learning and progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children join the Reception classes with levels of development broadly typical for their age. They are well prepared by staff to move into the school. Relationships between adults and children are very good and children settle quickly into well established routines. It was good to see children finding and putting on protective clothes independently of the adults, before they chose to do some painting. Good teaching and a reasonable balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children help children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Adults know the children well and regular assessment helps teachers to plan learning that is matched to children's needs. A clear focus on developing knowledge of sounds and letters is helping to accelerate children's reading skills and writing. Access to the small outdoor area directly from the Reception classes is restricted whilst it is being refurbished. Although activities are planned for other outdoor areas at different times in the week, the learning and play that can take place outdoors is limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more regular opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to learn and play outdoors.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of some subject leaders in order for them to make a fuller contribution to self-evaluation.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 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?	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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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

15 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Durham Newton Hall Infants' School, Durham, DH1 5LP

I really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting so many of you. Thank you for making me so welcome. I need to tell you what I found out about your school.

Newton Hall is a good school and in some ways it is outstanding. You are a credit to your school and I was impressed by your outstanding personal development. That means that I could see that you are delightful, happy and responsible children who behave very well and think about others a great deal. It was good to see you taking very good care of each other, especially at playtimes. You told me how keen you are to help others by raising funds for charities and to help the environment by recycling classroom waste. Well done!

I was very pleased to hear that so many of you enjoy school and like doing 'hard work'. This is because you are well taught and your teachers make lessons interesting for you. They make sure that you have just the right kind of work that helps you to do your best and reach really good standards. You certainly enjoy finding out about exciting things on visits or when visitors come to school. All the adults in your school work very hard together and take extremely good care of you. The help and support they give to you is excellent. They make sure that you are settled, happy and that any pupils who need extra help get it.

Your headteacher and governors know what needs to be done to make sure that you continue to do well in school. They agree that there are a few things still to do to make your school even better. These are:

- to make sure that the youngest children get plenty of chance to learn and play outdoors
- to make sure all subject leaders know what is going well in school and what more needs to be done.

You can help by carrying on enjoying your school, working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector