

# Howletch Lane Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114198
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311511
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Buller

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Graham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Rob Hanney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Pennine Drive Peterlee County Durham SR8 2NQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5862765
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5867370

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## Introduction

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

- Why, when the school judges teaching to be good, pupils' progress is variable between key stages and subjects.
- Whether curriculum improvements for the teaching of English have resulted in better progress and higher standards.
- Whether monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers are good enough to enable them to take effective action to meet challenging targets.

Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data, the school's own records, parents' questionnaires, analyses of pupils' previous work, lesson observations and interviews with staff, pupils and governors. 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 judgements, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The social and economic context of the school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but there is a higher proportion of pupils than nationally with statements of their special educational needs as the school houses a resource base for up to 20 physically disabled pupils. The school has Investors in People status and has recently achieved Healthy School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education. Good leadership and management including good links with parents, other schools and agencies, contribute well to this. Teamwork is strong and staff are motivated to succeed. Parents, teachers and teaching assistants have the highest regard for the school leadership and speak positively of mutual respect and trust among all staff. The recently introduced curriculum teams which include non-teaching staff are a positive development because they lead to all staff having a better overview of how well pupils are doing both personally and academically.

From skill levels on entry to school, which are well below those typical for their age, pupils achieve well to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. However, progress for some pupils as they move through the school is variable, particularly in the development of their writing skills. As a consequence, the school did not reach its targets for English in 2007. Although leaders and managers analyse the information gained from monitoring and evaluation well to set the key priorities for improvement, this is not used effectively enough to enable all pupils to accelerate their progress. The leadership team recognises this and is beginning to introduce a more rigorous process. Improvements are evident as a result and those pupils whose levels of attainment is below that expected for their age are now making good progress because they receive good quality, additional support. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done so that teachers have all the information they need to consistently challenge pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable.

Pupils' good levels of personal development and the high quality care and support provided by staff are key features in pupils' good achievement. Pupils enjoy many things about school, as shown in their above average attendance. They talk confidently about the variety of responsibilities they take on to assist in the smooth running of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities as members of the wider community. They enjoy the opportunities to plan and run fund-raising events for charities. Older pupils benefit from the range of opportunities that help them to understand about the world of work, finance and enterprise, such as running the healthy tuck shop. They greatly appreciate the information they are given to enable them to take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others.

Pupils are keen to learn and this enthusiasm is built upon by good teaching, which ensures that most key skills are taught effectively. Strengths include positive relationships, effective classroom management, good subject knowledge and the good use of a variety of teaching and learning styles. This combination results in pupils' good attitudes to each other and their work, good standards of behaviour and a good appreciation of pupils' differing abilities, beliefs and backgrounds.

The curriculum is broad and well matched to the pupils' needs in most areas. There is a good balance between academic work and other interesting activities to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding. Musical activities figure highly and are very popular. The school's 'healthy school' initiatives have resulted in pupils adopting more healthy food choices and increasing their activity levels through taking part in after-school sports clubs.

The care, support and guidance provided by the school are good and the arrangements for safeguarding children meet current guidelines. The school supports pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities effectively including making good use of professional help beyond the school and skilled classroom assistants. This is very much appreciated by parents, with one

stating, 'The school is managed extremely well and is extraordinary in the fact that they are actively engaging both able bodied and disabled kids together, this has a big learning and understanding benefit for all pupils that prepares them for outside of school life'. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have recently been given detailed targets to guide improvement in English. In some classes these are proving to be very effective in developing writing skills with pupils responding very well to the opportunity to take responsibility for their own improvement. This, together with other successful initiatives, gives the school a good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children are well provided for in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into both Nursery and Reception because of the strong induction procedures and the very close working partnership with parents. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter has progressed well through Nursery and into Reception. The school provides an excellent environment for the children to learn and develop'. Children enter Nursery with skill levels well below those typical for their age, although this can vary from year to year. They make good progress and when they start in Year 1, the majority are working towards the goals expected of them. Planning rightly places a strong emphasis on improving children's learning in communication, language and literacy and in adult-led activities this is effective. Opportunities are missed however, to reinforce this learning in the activities which children choose for themselves and on the days where other areas of learning are the main focus.

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

- Make better use of information gained from the checking of pupils' progress to ensure all pupils are consistently challenged.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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?	2

<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	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**

25 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howletch Lane Primary School, Durham, SR8 2NQ

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I inspected your school. You were all very friendly and I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you. You answered all my questions so thoughtfully and sensibly, and I was impressed with how polite you were.

Your school is a good school. Your teachers and all the other adults who work with you care about you a great deal and want you to do well. I know that you are very pleased that they help you to learn how to stay safe and healthy. I could see from the lessons that I visited that you receive good teaching. Teachers make lessons interesting so that you learn well. It is good that many of you now know how well you are doing and that you liked the way that this information allows you to check on what it is you need to include in your work to get to even higher levels.

You do well in your mathematics and science, and the school is working hard to help you to improve your writing. Your teachers try to make sure that the work they give you is at the right level to help build on what you already know. However, they do not always have all of the information they need about how well you have done in the past. To help with this I have asked the school to make better use of what they find out when they check your work so that the new work you are given is not too easy and you are always challenged to do your best.

I wish you well for the future and hope that you will go on helping to make your school such a lively and happy place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector