

Prince Bishops Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134855
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	316284
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Danson
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn George
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gibson Street Coundon Grange Bishop Auckland County Durham DL14 8DY
Telephone number	01388 451278
Fax number	01388 451624

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Inspection number	316284

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Prince Bishops is a newly built, smaller than average size primary school with a nursery. It opened in September 2006 to replace schools which closed. It serves families in the Dene Valley area near Bishop Auckland, which is a very disadvantaged locality in terms of its socio-economic character. A well above average proportion of pupils take free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well above average, although a below average number have a statement for special educational need. Most pupils have a white British heritage and a small proportion come from Gypsy/Roma homes. None are learning English as an additional language. The school has the Investors in Children, Healthy School, and the Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Prince Bishops is a good school where children thrive. The headteacher, together with her senior team, provides a very clear educational direction to the school's work for all staff. Together they successfully foster the philosophy that every child does matter and promote the school's aim that all will be helped to develop and learn as well as they can. This is a very inclusive school where, when taking pupils' backgrounds and starting points into account, their accomplishments reflect good achievement and personal development. Pupils from Traveller families and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, although more able and talented pupils do not do as well as they might. The school forges outstandingly effective partnerships, especially with parents who have full confidence in the school. One parent's comment sums up their views: 'The staff are very caring and go the extra mile.... The atmosphere is great and children are motivated to reach their full potential. The school is particularly good at sharing successes with parents.'

Pupils achieve well and standards are broadly average. They had only been in the new school for two terms before they took the national tests, so much of their preparation took place in other schools. In Key Stage 1, standards overall were below average because of the writing results in the 2007 statutory assessments. Writing was also a weakness in the Year 6 tests. Since then, the school has acted promptly to tackle the issue of writing and a new initiative to raise standards is already paying dividends. Sustained attention to developing reading is also working well. Pupils make good progress in all year groups through daily phonics and reading activities which has helped improve reading to a broadly average level. In Year 6, standards in mathematics and science were broadly average.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved in lessons, and act safely and sensibly in and out of doors. They thoroughly enjoy school, work very enthusiastically, are delighted when they do well and happily share the success of others. They value the importance of personal hygiene, learn about healthy food and willingly take part in physical activities. The school and wider community benefits enormously in many ways from their contribution. Their confidence, good social skills and competent basic skills stand them in good stead for their future.

Governors play an effective role in ensuring the school is very well managed and administered. The headteacher and senior leadership team successfully promote good achievement and personal development through good teaching, a well managed, rich curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support. The school, therefore, gives good value for money. Teachers help pupils know how well they are doing, and how to take the next steps in their learning. Governors and staff carefully review the quality of the school's work and accurately identify areas for development. The school sets and uses challenging targets at both whole school and at individual pupil level well. Its short but clear track record of progress since opening indicates a good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress from very low starting points when they join the Nursery. On leaving the Reception class, many children's skills and abilities in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematics remain well below those typical for their age. Caring relationships help children make particularly

good progress in their personal development, with most acquiring skills typical for their age. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but planning does not sufficiently ensure children improve their progress in all areas of learning through best use of the outdoor facilities. Teaching is satisfactory. Adults interact sensitively with children and encourage them to talk and extend their ideas. Parents greatly appreciate the useful information and guidance they receive about their children's work, and how they might help them at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate arrangements to raise standards and improve progress, especially in writing, and by more able pupils.
- Improve the outdoor facilities in the Foundation Stage and integrate them more effectively with the indoor learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average. In Year 2, standards were below average in the national tests in 2007, because of pupils' performance in writing. Standards in reading and mathematics were broadly average. The weakness in writing was also evident in Year 6, although standards in reading, mathematics and science were broadly average. While an average number of pupils reached the expected level in all subjects, too few gained the higher level, reflecting the satisfactory progress made by more able and talented pupils.

The school's record of assessments shows that continuing the successful work using phonics has sustained pupils' good progress in reading in all year groups. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in all year groups now make good progress particularly in writing as a result of the successful introduction of the new initiative. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make particularly good progress. Traveller pupils achieve well. More able and talented pupils do not progress as well as they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good with some aspects that are outstanding. Pupils convincingly describe how they enjoy school. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe in a wide range of situations. They understand important aspects of a healthy lifestyle, taking opportunities to exercise and eat healthily. Their spiritual, moral and social developments are outstanding. Cultural development is good because, although pupils understand the characteristics of art and music of other cultures, they have less experience of the multi-cultural nature of their own wider community. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and good at playtimes. Pupils make outstanding contributions to their community and school life, for example, by developing the garden and successfully promoting positive behaviour as playground buddies. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through developing impressive skills in team work and a very good awareness of enterprise and business. Although basic writing skills are weak, reading and numeracy skills are average and information and communication technology skills are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well as a result of effective teaching. Strengths include diligently planned lessons where teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and pupils are industrious and learn well. Teachers adapt activities well to suit pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but do not consistently challenge more able and talented pupils. Teachers reinforce learning by sharing the purpose of their lesson and showing pupils how to check their work at the end. In some classes, this process works well but it is not always effective because of insufficient time. Teachers mark pupils' work well. As part of the new writing initiative, their comments praise pupils' accomplishments and inform them about what needs to be done to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets requirements for all pupils. It is well adapted to specific groups of learners, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but less successfully for more able and talented pupils. Very good use of visits and visitors enriches pupils' understanding and skills in all subjects and fosters their personal development. The curriculum is often modified to give extra support for school priorities such as the recent writing initiatives, although its benefit is yet to be extended to develop writing skills more widely throughout the curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' learning opportunities. A high number take part in additional activities to promote exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school is exceptionally successful in caring for and supporting its pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Teachers and support staff are diligent in responding to the academic and personal needs of pupils; for example, excellent provision in and out of lessons supports and guides those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils achieve well. In addition, the school makes exceptional use of outside expertise to support individual needs. Comprehensive arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils meet requirements. Teachers make extensive and effective use of assessment to support learning. This gives pupils a clear understanding of good work and how to improve it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management play a crucial part in promoting the very positive climate for learning evident throughout the school. The headteacher and senior leaders show outstanding determination to raise achievement and their initiatives are meeting with success. Governors and the leadership team give the highest priority to promoting partnerships with families and enhancing the local community. Governance is good. Governors receive informative reports and rigorously review all aspects of school life. They are developing a clear knowledge of the

school and, to enhance this further, they know their next step is to gain more first-hand experience of its work. Senior leaders and governors work well together to carry out self-evaluation and give priority to raising standards in their well thought-out development plan. Such good quality leadership and management are entirely responsible for the way this new school has successfully got off to a good start.

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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	1
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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prince Bishops Community Primary School, Durham,

DL14 8DY

Mr Watson and I really enjoyed our recent visit to your new school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assemblies to see you at work. You were exceptionally polite and really helpful. We enjoyed talking to you and we were impressed with those of you whom we met. We were especially pleased to see how you enjoy coming to school and how much you contribute to school life. We know the headteacher and the staff are all very proud of you.

Yours is a good school. It has a very warm and welcoming atmosphere and is very well organised. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy. They help those of you that find work difficult to do really well. Many of your lessons are good and some are excellent. Mr Watson and I were impressed with the way you work hard and like to take part. We liked the way your teachers often share what you are going to do in lessons and the way they help you review your work so that you know how well you are doing.

Last year, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 did not do so well in the writing tests everyone has to take, compared to reading, mathematics and science. We have asked the school to build on the new approach to teaching writing so you can improve your skills further. We also found that some pupils who should have gained the highest marks in the tests last year did not do so. We have asked the school to make sure that work in lessons challenges you all so you can gain the highest marks possible. Mr Watson and I also found those of you in the Nursery and Reception class could use the outdoor area more. We have asked the school to help children there to make the best possible use of the outside area in their play and work.

Some of you will leave at the end of this year to join a new school. You have very many opportunities at Prince Bishops Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. We hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector