

Portobello Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108336
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	324747
Inspection date	7 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	195
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy McGuinness
Headteacher	Ms Angela Charlton
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tamerton Drive Birtley Chester le Street County Durham DH3 2LY
Telephone number	0191 4104571
Fax number	0191 4109146

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues.

- Whether pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 build well enough on the good start which they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- The impact of the creative curriculum on the development of pupils' basic skills.
- Whether the school's analysis of its provision focuses well enough on the impact made on the progress of all groups of pupils.

Evidence was gathered from the school's records of pupils' progress and the assessments of the standards they attain, from observing teaching and learning, from analysis of pupils' work in books and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were also analysed. 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 in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and draws its pupils from an area which is average in terms of social advantage. A much smaller proportion of pupils than is typical of other primary schools claim a free school meal. Most pupils are of White British background with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

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 which serves its community well and where an outstanding curriculum ensures that pupils enthusiastically embrace all that the school has to offer. Pupils achieve well in the acquisition of basic skills and in their personal development, which is excellent. Pupils and parents overwhelming support the school's priority which is to provide an exciting range of creative activities based on developing pupils' understanding of their local cultural heritage and the diversity of the world around them. This provides pupils with a real purpose for their work and adds significantly to the good progress which they make. They build well on the good start made in the EYFS. They make consistently good progress in response to good teaching to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.

Strong pastoral care and a welcoming, supportive ethos result in pupils feeling safe and happy. They thoroughly enjoy school and are extremely well behaved. This is evident in their regular attendance and the excellent attitudes they have towards the school and learning. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and, whether in lessons or in the play areas, treat each other well and look out for each other. They enjoy having responsibilities around the school and Year 6 pupils are excellent role models in caring for and supporting younger pupils, for example, as playground buddies. Pupils become familiar with the principles of democracy by electing their school councillors, who contribute very well to their school community. They are developing an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and how important this is to their growth and development. With their mature social skills and good academic progress, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Leadership and management are good. The school's evaluation of its own performance is broadly accurate and the actions it has taken to bring about improvement particularly those aimed at raising standards in pupils' writing are having a positive impact. The school clearly knows itself well and improvement planning identifies the right priorities, however, identified success criteria at times concentrate too much on implementation rather than the impact of actions on the progress which pupils make. Systems to track pupils' progress have improved well since the last inspection and for the most part are used effectively to identify those pupils who need additional support. Although this is particularly successful in helping those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make at least the same good progress as their peers, it is less effective in setting of challenging targets for all pupils. This is one of the main reasons why despite consistently good teaching pupils progress remains good rather than outstanding.

The school provides a good quality of teaching and learning. In most lessons work is well planned to match the needs of different groups and they learn at a good rate. Support and guidance are increasingly focused on helping pupils to think about how they learn and what they need to do to improve their knowledge and understanding. This approach is beginning to pay dividends. Well targeted questioning encourages pupils to answer questions, explain their work and think about what else they might need to do to help them make better progress. At times however, when pupils' individual targets have been set too low, teachers' expectations of the rate of progress pupils are capable of making is not high enough. At these times learning does not move at a fast enough pace.

The school takes excellent care of its pupils; particular attention is paid to ensuring that procedures and practices are robust in safeguarding pupils. The school has good links with other professionals to get specialist support for pupils where needed. Governance is good.

Governors work well to ensure that the school is effectively held to account for the quality of education which it provides for pupils. The school has a good knowledge of the needs of the community in which it is situated; developing pupils' knowledge of the world in which they live and how they can contribute to it is successfully placed at the heart of the school's work. The school is well placed to continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children's learning and development is good. Children enter the Reception class with skills typical for children of their age, except in calculation which is a weaker aspect. There is a stimulating range of activities both inside and outdoors which children enjoy and which support their development in all key areas of learning. A strong emphasis on the development of early reading and writing through a detailed focus on sounds and letters together with effective teaching in calculation skills mean that children generally make rapid progress. Occasionally, when the teacher is working with the whole class, some children are not fully engaged. The nursery nurse works well with individuals and with small groups of children, although her skills are underused in whole class sessions. Overall, children achieve well, so that by the end of their Reception year they have attained a consistently good level of development across all the areas of their learning. Children's welfare is promoted well. Links with nursery settings enable staff to develop good relationships and a thorough knowledge of children before they start school. Consequently, children feel safe and secure, act sensibly and responsibly, taking good care of one another. Children very much enjoy activities to promote their physical development which are particularly well taught. They are encouraged to eat healthily and understand the need for personal hygiene. The leadership and management of the EYFS are good. Adults plan well together and have a clear and detailed understanding of pupils' skills and the progress they are making.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that expectations of what pupils can achieve are sufficiently challenging.
- Ensure that monitoring focuses sharply on the impact of the actions taken on pupils' progress.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	2

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Portobello Primary School, Gateshead, DH3 2LY

On behalf of the team, I would like to say a big thank you for your excellent behaviour and your friendly and polite welcome when we inspected your school recently. Particular thanks to those of you who talked to us about the school. We think you are getting a good education at Portobello Primary. You told us that your school takes good care of you and that you feel safe and happy. We agree. We could clearly see how much you enjoyed your lessons. The school makes learning fun and interesting and takes great care to make sure you understand how to play your part in reaching even higher standards. It was good to see how much your writing is improving.

Every school can get better and we are asking your school to do these things to improve further.

- To make sure that the targets they set for you provide the correct level of challenge.
- To check carefully whether what they provide for you is helping you to do as well as you can.

We wish you all the best for the future!

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector