

Cullercoats Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108569
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	324793
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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)	359
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	Dr David Lilley
Headteacher	Mr Gavin Storey
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marden Avenue Cullercoats North Shields Tyne and Wear NE30 4PB
Telephone number	0191 2008721
Fax number	0191 2008722

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or pupils who speak English as an additional language. A very small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and there is a higher than average proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school is part of the specialist Physical Education (PE) Primary pilot and holds a number of awards including the International School Award, the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory; there are several good and some outstanding aspects to its work. Pupils make satisfactory progress and most reach the standards that are expected nationally for 11 year olds. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and praise it for the many opportunities it provides for their children to learn and develop. Comments such as, 'The staff are approachable, dedicated and give freely of their time. Cullercoats is a happy and caring school', are typical.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They develop good personal qualities and have an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. They have a good knowledge of their local community and a strong sense of responsibility for their own and the wider community. Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Occasionally, a little immature behaviour in one class sometimes slows pupils' learning. The school has this situation under review so that appropriate interventions can be employed when needed.

The rich curriculum has many excellent features which increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their enjoyment of school. Provision for PE and sport is outstanding, with excellent resources making a huge contribution to the range of skills that pupils develop. The excellent playground surface, much praised by parents, ensures that pupils safely enjoy vigorous play. Outdoor learning has been extremely well developed so that pupils have frequent opportunities to learn from and in natural surroundings. A relative weakness in curriculum provision is a shortage of computers which reduces pupils' progress in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' awareness of their local community is very strong. This is successfully developed through contact with the lifeboat services in the area and visits to the nearby marine laboratory. Year 6 pupils are rightly proud of their high quality booklet about the town's maritime heritage.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Nearly every pupil achieves the level expected for their age in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Some exceed this level, especially in science where standards are very high. At the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are average, though the proportion that reach the higher Level 3 is below that found nationally. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and in all lessons there are good aspects to teaching and learning. Some inconsistencies in practice, such as the accuracy and use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning, have led to pupils' progress being satisfactory, rather than good overall, as they move through the school. The school has recognised this issue and has put in place new assessment and tracking systems that are developing well and are improving pupils' progress in the current Year 2.

The recently appointed headteacher has set an appropriate agenda for improvements to the school and is well supported by staff and governors. Staff and pupils are pleased that their views are listened to and that they have a role in improving the school. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory however, the systems are not working effectively enough to take the school forward quickly. The school sets, and usually meets, realistic and challenging targets. Governors are supportive of the school and are instrumental in ensuring that pupils have equal access to the very rich curriculum.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children join the Reception class with attainment that is typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and by the time they enter Year 1, most have achieved the early learning goals. However, some do less well in emotional and behavioural development. Provision for their welfare is good. Parents speak highly of the links that staff make with them and of the reassurance they feel because their children are so well cared for and nurtured. Careful planning for children's learning and development is based on regular assessments of their progress and takes good account of their interests and aptitudes. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activity, so that children develop independence and confidence and make steady gains in their knowledge of sounds, letters and numbers.

While staff plan interesting activities for children to learn through play, these do not have sufficient impact on children's learning for a number of reasons. There are too few resources that are interesting and enticing for children, this restricts planning, as well as limiting children's choices and development. The layout of the rooms means spaces for learning are cramped, which hinders children's social development and limits some activities. Outdoors, a wonderful climbing and balance area takes up almost the whole space. Staff find it very difficult to make provision for the other areas of learning to allow children to enjoy as much. Despite these difficulties, staff ensure that children develop a love of learning. Parents are delighted that their children enjoy school so much. One comment represents the views of many: 'Our child ...is positively joyful about her school experience each and every day.' Good teamwork and management place the Early Years Foundation Stage in a good position for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of teacher assessment and its consistent use when planning future work for all groups of pupils, in particular the more able.
- Improve leadership and management so that the school can gain a detailed picture of its strengths and areas for improvement, through comprehensive, regular and rigorous monitoring.
- Improve the provision for ICT to give pupils regular access to high quality learning in the subject.
- Improve learning resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the internal and outdoor space available for children's learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average by Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting point at the end of Reception to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils now in Year 2 are on track to reach average standards by the end of the school year, though there are few pupils on course to reach Level 3, except in mathematics. There has been a dip in standards at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection, which reflects a downward trend nationally. The school

explains this as the result of more accurate teacher assessment of pupils' standards at the end of Year 2.

Unvalidated test results for 2008 indicate that the school's performance was above average for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. This represented satisfactory progress because pupils had reached similar levels earlier in their school lives. However, while nearly all pupils reached the expected level in these subjects, fewer than average reached the higher Level 5 in English. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach the targets set for them in the national tests at the end of the year. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others because of the support they receive in and out of the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Some aspects are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school, as their good attendance testifies and say they feel safe there. They are well behaved and very supportive of each other in most classes. In some classes, behaviour is exemplary. However, a few pupils in one class have immature attitudes and their behaviour occasionally disrupts the learning of others. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and make sensible choices about what to eat. They understand very well the need to keep themselves safe and the vast majority work well together to create a safe and harmonious community inside the school. Pupils are exceptionally well informed about keeping fit and active. They relish the many opportunities they have for sport. Pupils take on responsibilities such as young sports leaders, which makes a good contribution to the community ethos of the school. Outside of school, pupils play a significant part in raising the awareness of the local community to traffic issues by acting as junior road safety officers, monitoring parking and assisting at the nearby crossing patrol. Pupils also enjoy helping to improve the school through the school council. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for their future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. In some classes, teachers make very good use of assessment information to tailor learning so that all pupils have exactly the right starting point for tasks. This allows pupils to work independently and at their own best pace. Where assessment is not well used, the level of challenge is not right for all pupils, so learning slows. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this is often well used to pose questions that challenge pupils' thinking, and, in the best lessons, assess how well they are learning. The use of targets and success criteria is developing well. Though inconsistent at present, it is having an impact on pupils' understanding of their own progress and their part in it. Pupils say, and inspection evidence supports their view, that they learn best when they have plenty of practical activities to do or work with a partner or as part of a team. Teachers' expectations vary across the school. Where they are very high, learning is excellent and proceeds at a brisk pace. In these lessons there is a buzz of excitement but this quality of learning is not yet consistent enough across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and there are a number of outstanding aspects. Provision for literacy and numeracy and ICT are satisfactory overall. Provision for ICT is satisfactory because of a lack of suitable equipment to teach the full curriculum and give pupils regular access to computers. There is outstanding provision for pupils' physical development through activities which include wall climbing, games skills and rowing practice. The school's involvement in the national Primary PE Specialism pilot has had a significant impact on pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. This has had a positive impact in some subjects, especially science, where pupils' standards are well above the national average. The PE specialism has also impacted on the Key Stage 1 curriculum where the excellent promotion of outdoor learning is enhancing pupils' well-being and their enjoyment of learning. There is an outstanding range of very popular extra-curricular activities covering arts, crafts, drama and music, as well as sport. These are very well attended and add much to the development of pupils' special interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality day-to-day care for pupils is a strong feature of the school. All requirements to ensure that pupils are safeguarded are fully in place. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils ensure that any worries are swiftly identified and dealt with. Most parents are very happy with the care and support their children receive and say they feel confident that their children are well cared for. A few parents expressed concern about behaviour. The school has taken effective action to improve behaviour in one year group and is monitoring improvements to assess if more intervention is needed. The procedures to keep pupils safe and free from harm meet national guidelines. Those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported to overcome barriers to their learning. This helps them to make similar progress to their peers. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. In some classes, teachers provide pupils with good quality feedback. They set individual targets which are meaningful and are referred to regularly in lessons. Although improving, this is not yet consistent across the school or in all subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The new headteacher has established good working relationships with all staff, who give good support to his vision for improving the school. Middle leaders have responded well to the challenge to be involved in making improvements. Monitoring and evaluation are developing well, especially in teaching and learning. However, the leadership and management are not yet having sufficient impact on school improvement. It does not yet collect enough detailed information about the impact of its work and this affects the accuracy of some of its judgements. At present, senior leaders have too many responsibilities. While the role of middle leaders is developing well, it is improving at too slow a rate to enable them to play a bigger part in leading change. Improvements this year demonstrate the energy and enthusiasm for developing the school. For example, a new tracking system, though not yet fully implemented, is having an impact on improving progress in a number of classes, while the curriculum continues to develop some outstanding strengths.

The school's evaluation of its impact and strategy for contributing to community cohesion is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their role within the school, local and wider communities. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, and the school is soundly placed to make further improvements.

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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?	3
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	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	3
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cullercoats Primary School, North Tyneside, NE30 4PB

Thank you for making the inspection of your school so enjoyable, and many thanks for all the help you gave us in finding out about your school. Please pass on our thanks to your parents for returning the questionnaires. They showed that most think you are well cared for and safe in school. We looked at some concerns a few have about behaviour, and could see that the school is paying close attention to improving this.

It was good to see how well you enjoy the exciting curriculum the school provides. You must be among the fittest pupils in the country because of your marvellous PE activities! Well done, and keep up your enthusiasm – it was a great pleasure to see. We also saw that some of you move at a fast pace in lessons, though this is not the case for all of you. We have asked your school to make sure learning is increased in some classes by making sure teachers give you the right starting points for your work. We also agree with you that computer facilities could be better and have asked the school to improve these too.

Many of you told us how well cared for and safe you feel. We agree that your teachers form excellent relationships with you and know you very well. This is one of the things that makes your school such a happy and friendly place. Your school develops your personal qualities well so that you are caring and considerate. Your understanding of healthy living is excellent. You make a good contribution to your school and wider communities through taking action to make things better for others. In many ways your school is preparing you to be good citizens of the future.

We judge that your school is satisfactory, because most of you make expected progress during your time there and reach the standards expected for your age. This can be quickly improved by making sure that all the good ideas that teachers use are shared for the benefit of all of you and giving the Reception class better facilities to help them to learn. We have asked the school to keep a close check on things so that they can see where improvements are most needed. You can help by working as hard as you do now and by enjoying school with the same gusto!

We could not close without a thank you for the lovely booklet you have produced on the Maritime museum. Well done to all involved.

Our very best wishes to all at Cullercoats Primary!

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector