

Bamburgh School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108738
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	324824
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	113
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 Pat Morris
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn McKellar
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Norham Avenue South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 7TD
Telephone number	0191 4274330
Fax number	0191 4274331

Age group	3–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves mainly the communities of South Shields, Hebburn, and Jarrow. These wards are in areas of considerable social and economic deprivation. Pupils are admitted with a wide range of medical, mental and physical difficulties and/or disabilities. Increasing numbers of pupils display autistic spectrum disorders and complex emotional difficulties, often associated with challenging behaviours. Each pupil has a statement of special educational need. Nearly all are White British, closely reflecting the cultural make-up of the region. Pupils of all ages are admitted and leave at any time in the school year.

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. It provides outstanding pastoral care for its pupils and this is a major factor contributing to their excellent personal development and well-being. The school is led, managed and governed well, has improved well since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve in the future. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and concerned about the future of the school: 'This is the best place for our child and we do not want the school to close,' sums up the view of many parents.

Many pupils, especially the youngest, enter the school displaying a degree of learning difficulty and/or disability that means they are highly unlikely to meet national expectations in their learning. However, other pupils, often joining later in their school careers, have the potential to meet or even exceed national standards because their difficulties are predominantly physical or emotional, rather than long-term, limiting, learning difficulties. This is reflected in standards that are below average overall, but not exceptionally so. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well and make good progress because they are taught well, have access to a good, well-enriched curriculum and are cared for very sensitively. There are, however, instances when teachers miss, or neglect to implement, planned opportunities for pupils to work sufficiently collaboratively so as to encourage them to talk to one another and recognise the benefits of working as part of a team. Opportunities are missed to celebrate pupils' achievements by displaying more of their work more prominently in otherwise bright and stimulating displays in classrooms and corridors.

Pupils show great fortitude in the way they cope with their difficulties. With the security the school gives them, they behave well, learn to control their emotions and most attend whenever they can because they feel understood and happy that their needs are being met. As one parent comments, 'Bamburgh School offers vulnerable children who have the capacity to learn and achieve the chance to do so in an environment that nurtures, supports, understands and encourages their efforts'. Rigorous attention is paid to keeping pupils safe and pupils learn quickly about the value of their own contribution to the process. They show a very good awareness of what they need to do to stay healthy in body and in mind. The school is served well by pupils' acute awareness that they have a responsibility to help each other and that, by pulling together, they can contribute to school improvement. The school succeeds in preparing pupils optimistically for the future by helping them to address their physical and emotional difficulties while making good academic progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

It is rare for the school to admit children into the Early Years Foundation Stage. During the inspection none was present. Nevertheless, there is good, planned provision for these younger children. Slightly older ones in Key Stage 1 frequently benefit from this because the nature of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that their needs are addressed best by the provision of learning and developmental opportunities more usually associated with younger children. In recent years, the few children passing through the Early Years Foundation Stage have achieved well. Nearly all have arrived at the very earliest stages of learning and development and, by the time they have left, many have achieved levels of learning and personal development that are approaching national expectations. Recent records provide evidence of children making particularly good progress in their personal development and approaching the level expected

of mainstream pupils in their learning. Very good links exist between the Early Years Foundation Stage provision at Bamburgh and its adjoining mainstream school. These links allow children to benefit from exceptionally good resources and help them to feel fully included in the mainstream system. Provision is led and managed very well. Key members of staff show a heightened awareness of the importance of catering to the learning and developmental needs of young children by keeping them safe and giving them a wide range of opportunities to learn through exploration, experiment and play. Assessment is precise and perceptive, in that it not only records the progress children have made but also what has contributed to it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that no opportunity is missed to encourage pupils to work collaboratively and interact with one another to enhance learning.
- Include more examples of pupils' best work in wall displays, so as to celebrate success more overtly and raise pupils' self-esteem.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. The combination of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities results in standards being below average overall. This, though, is not always the case. A few pupils are attaining and occasionally exceeding the standards expected in mainstream schools. This is reflected in statutory assessments at Key Stages 2 and 3 and in GCSE examination results. Usually, younger pupils enter the school with levels of attainment well below average. They achieve well, when all their barriers to learning are taken into account. Many of the older pupils admitted in Key Stages 3 and 4 have fewer learning difficulties than these younger pupils but demonstrate a far greater degree of emotional or mental trauma. Many have previously refused to attend school but have settled well at Bamburgh, so that they thrive and fulfil their potential. As a result, the 20 pupils who left last year all achieved at least one GCSE and 10 achieved more than five. Good teaching throughout the school, combined with pupils' enthusiasm for learning, a curriculum that serves all pupils well and the outstanding care, guidance and support offered to pupils, contributes to every pupil in the school being offered the opportunity to achieve well and taking that opportunity to do so.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their well-being are outstanding. On entering the school, many are at a very low stage of personal development. The very youngest children make rapid strides in learning how to relate to others and develop their personal skills. Later arrivals, up to the age of 16, make excellent progress in addressing individual physical, mental and personal difficulties that have, increasingly, impacted on their personal development, well-being and achievement in previous settings. Pupils talk confidently to visitors and, when doing so, display excellent social skills. Good behaviour ensures that learning is rarely disrupted and that everyone feels safe. Pupils show a very good awareness and understanding of each other's difficulties, so that there is a tremendous sense of community. Attendance is good, targets are met and nearly all absence is accounted for by extreme medical or emotional conditions. The good range of accredited courses followed by Key Stage 4 pupils is clearly effective in promoting the good attendance of these pupils. Pupils overcome significant physical and emotional issues and all show a particularly good awareness of the need for a healthy

lifestyle. Pupils leave this school with much brighter futures than when they enter it. In the words of a parent, 'My son has made friends and is understood by staff, after an extremely hard medical history, enduring pain and frustration we can't imagine. Bamburgh School helped us retrieve our son and helped him to thrive'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Classrooms are well managed; relationships between adults and pupils are good and a strength of the school. This helps to create an atmosphere in which pupils are keen to learn and behave well. Most of the teaching is good but there is not enough that is outstanding. Classrooms are bright and displays are informative and stimulating but do not include many examples of pupils' best work, other than in classrooms for Key Stages 1 and 2. Learning opportunities are well planned and often incorporate activities that further stimulate pupils and help them to learn in the style that suits them best. Most teachers plan a range of activities that encourage pupils to work together and help each other. However, these are not always carried through, so that, sometimes, pupils work individually rather than collaboratively. Classroom assistants offer skilled and invaluable pastoral and learning support to individuals and small groups. Work is marked accurately, so that pupils know where they have achieved success and how they can improve their work.

Information from previous learning is used well in teachers' planning for different needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good, well-enriched curriculum is increasingly well planned around the Every Child Matters agenda. All statutory requirements are met. The focus on promoting the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is good. Provision for personal, social and health education occupies a central and very important place in the timetable. This contributes particularly strongly to pupils' outstanding personal development. A strong programme of work-related learning for older pupils gives them important insights into their options on leaving school and incorporates opportunities for all to experience life in the workplace. For the pupils with the highest levels of need, these work experience opportunities are chosen carefully to ensure that they are supported well and monitored. There is a strong emphasis on promoting independent travel, a vital skill for helping pupils to become more independent. A good range of externally accredited courses, including a good range of GCSE courses, helps older pupils to have their progress recognised and rewarded. This opens up opportunities for the most able to continue their further education on leaving school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. Parents express a high degree of gratitude for this and are confident that their children are being cared for, guided and supported very well. The tracking of pupils' progress has improved radically since the last inspection. It is now good and is providing teachers with the information they need to present pupils with work that challenges them appropriately and gives all an equal opportunity to succeed. Arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding and care of pupils meet requirements. They are comprehensive and monitored

closely. Potential risks in all situations are assessed comprehensively to minimise the possibility of accidents. There is regular communication with parents, for instance, through the use of home-school diaries and staff work closely with the wide range of professionals and agencies that contribute further to the welfare of pupils. Older pupils receive excellent advice about their options on leaving school, which for most involve opportunities in further education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. This is recognised and appreciated by the vast majority of parents. Staff at all levels contribute well to self-evaluation, with the result that leaders and managers have built up an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and those areas most in need of improvement. This has contributed well to improvement since the last inspection and augurs well for future improvement. Governors are highly supportive and have worked tirelessly to help the school overcome difficulties, aided considerably through good-quality information provided by the headteacher. Self-evaluation is accurate. Teaching is monitored closely and accurately, mainly by the headteacher, but increasingly by members of the leadership team and staff are given good advice on how they can improve their practice. Equality of opportunity is promoted excellently. This assumes great importance as the range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities widens and changes. The school contributes well to community cohesion, playing a considerable role in working with schools, colleges and other providers to broaden their understanding and acceptance of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a stronger focus on the local community than national or international communities. The school is immaculately maintained, well administered and excellently resourced, with many specialist facilities.

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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?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/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	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 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

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 eliminated	1
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**

10 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bamburgh School, South Tyneside, NE34 7TD

I would like to say a big thank you for making my visit so enjoyable. You were all so polite and friendly and I had lovely chats with some of you. You made it very clear how much you like school and how hard you are working to achieve success and pave the way for a successful future.

You attend a good school. You are taught well and you get on very well with the staff. As a result you make good progress in lessons. It is very clear that you are determined to achieve success in life. You work hard, behave well and most of you attend whenever you can. Your personal development is outstanding. This makes a huge contribution to keeping the school a safe and happy place. Your timetables are filled with activities that you enjoy and you are looked after extremely well. A lot of good, hard work by leaders, managers and governors has helped the school to improve since it was last inspected.

Part of my job is to share in the celebration of all the things that schools do well but also to make suggestions about what could be done to make them even better. I came up with a couple of things that I thought would help improve your school. As I walked round I thought what a wonderful, bright building you occupy but it occurred to me that there wasn't a lot of your own work on display. I thought this was a shame because you do a lot of good work and I felt that this should be celebrated more openly. I know that a lot of you are quite happy working on your own, but I also felt that you should be given more encouragement to work together in class on solving problems.

Once again, thank you for making my two days in your school so enjoyable. Good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector