

Acklam Whin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111586
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	325407
Inspection date	11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	410
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	Cllr Janice Brunton
Headteacher	Mr John Lees
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Carlbury Avenue Acklam Middlesbrough TS5 8SQ
Telephone number	01642 813938
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve achievement for boys in literacy; the effectiveness of assessment in tracking pupils of above average ability who do not achieve as well as expected and how well leadership has sharpened its evaluation of its planning for improvement. Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons and lunchtimes. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, senior leaders and governors. Pupils' work, key documents and data including the school's self-evaluation were scrutinised. 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 where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is almost twice the size of other primary schools nationally and is set in an area of social advantage. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is below average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about half the national average. The number of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average and very few pupils do not have English as their first language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are accommodated in a Nursery class, either for the morning or afternoon session and in two Reception classes offering full day provision.

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 that shows exceptional levels of care, guidance and support for its pupils. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They show high levels of self-esteem, pride in their achievements, an excitement for learning and loyalty to the school. Parents are truly delighted with the caring and positive influence the school has on their children. This is evident from the very high return of questionnaires and the numerous positive comments, including, 'Excellent school, approachable staff, well maintained school premises, numerous after school activities and excellent classroom support.' In spite of the school's large size, pupils learn in a warm, friendly atmosphere. The extremely strong leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by the senior leadership team, has ensured that above average standards have been well maintained at both key stages over a number of years.

When children enter the school, their attainment is broadly at the level expected for their age. They make good progress in the EYFS and this continues in Key Stage 1 where standards are above average. The school has recently introduced new systems for teaching pupils to recognise letters and sounds and this is improving standards, particularly in reading, for girls and boys alike. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 are above average and achievement is good. In this very inclusive school, pupils who have English as an additional language achieve extremely well. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well due to strong adult support. Test results show that pupils in the 2008 cohort reached the challenging targets set for them. Overall, pupils achieve best in mathematics and science with almost half reaching the higher level in the tests. In English, pupils achieve well in reading, but less so in writing. This is mainly because boys, as well as some pupils of above average ability, achieve less well in this subject area. A major strength of the school is the way it tracks the progress of every pupil. School assessment data show that throughout the school there is some inconsistency in progress in writing between classes and year groups when compared with other subjects. Current year groups are expected to achieve better in mathematics, reading and science than in writing.

Pupils have very clear views about why they enjoy their education. They particularly like the way teachers make learning fun. They especially enjoy the challenge of being independent learners and finding things out for themselves. They feel very well cared for because teachers offer high levels of support when they need it and are confident that each one of them is equally valued by teachers. From the pupils' viewpoint these are the main reasons why they achieve so well and why they are very well prepared for the next stage of education. Pupils develop high levels of responsibility because the school values their ideas. Older pupils help younger ones with their reading. They have a deepening awareness of ecological issues and learn to grow vegetables, care for the school pet rabbit and actively promote recycling. They look after the library and conserve energy by ensuring lights are switched off. Pupils are very polite and well mannered. They are very well behaved and help devise classroom rules. Pupils know that eating good food and taking regular exercise prepare them well for a healthy lifestyle. This is one of the reasons why the wide range of sports clubs are oversubscribed and very well attended. Their excellent personal development gives them the skills needed to become caring, tolerant and very responsible members of their school, town and global community. The links with overseas schools, for example in Sri Lanka, are noteworthy. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding.

Pupils learn so successfully because teachers provide work that challenges each individual. As a result, pupils display high levels of concentration and a very good work ethic. Teachers use very good strategies to engage pupils. They encourage pupils to formulate their own ideas and share these with classmates. Teachers guide pupils towards becoming increasingly responsible for assessing and evaluating their own work. Consequently, pupils have very clear aims and know exactly what they have to do to make their work better. In classes, pupils are very well supported by able assistants. They know that adults are always on hand should they need help. Therefore pupils grow in confidence, secure in the good progress they are making. Pupils are very competent with technology. They develop good skills and use them well in other subjects. The school has begun to develop strategies to improve achievement in writing by using a consistent approach to teaching specific skills and strategies. In classes where teachers plan for writing across different subjects, both boys and girls show high levels of enthusiasm and motivation. This approach is not consistently applied across the school which limits the range of writing opportunities. Pupils enjoy a broad and varied curriculum and say there is so much to do in their school that everyone gets the chance to develop hidden talents. This could be in sport, art, cooking, choir or music. They especially enjoy visitors to the school and school outings, including residential weeks all of which widen their horizons.

Pupils receive very high levels of care because systems and procedures to protect and safeguard them are in place and well adhered to. Staff are very vigilant and well informed about protecting pupils. Consequently, pupils feel very safe in school and know how to be adventurous, but careful at the same time.

Leadership rigorously monitors all aspects of the school's provision. The school has distributed management responsibilities to key staff who are already involved in further training and development towards this end. Staff throughout the school work well as a team to improve learning for all pupils. Detailed and accurate assessment systems inform staff about the progress of every pupil ensuring 'stuck pupils' are not left behind. The school knows itself well and uses this accurate knowledge of strengths and areas in need of improvement to produce comprehensive action plans that are very relevant to the needs of the school. Governance is particularly strong and plays a full and active part in the school's strategic leadership. Governors evaluate their own performance thoroughly and constantly challenge the work of the school to ensure it continues to provide a good education for its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the EYFS is good. Through good partnerships with parents, children's needs are assessed very carefully on entry to Nursery and this helps them get off to a good start. Children's progress is built on successfully throughout the EYFS. Provision for their learning and development is good and ensures that they quickly gain confidence and learn from a good range of practical first-hand experiences. They learn in bright, stimulating classrooms and in a well equipped outdoor space, both of which are used imaginatively to capture children's attention and make learning fun. As a result, they achieve very well and, from skills and knowledge which are broadly typical of three-year-olds when they enter Nursery, they reach standards which are above average by the time they enter Year 1. Outstanding provision for children's welfare ensures they make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children improvise and communicate well with others during role play; they understand daily rules and routines, and have an excellent understanding of how these are important for their safety. Staff are good at helping children to develop early reading, writing and numeracy skills.

Many children recognise their own name and letters. Adults provide a range of challenging tasks that help them reinforce their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them sound out simple words. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. Staff work very well as a team and keep good records of children's all round development, although there is scope to improve and sharpen the use of this information when planning tasks for specific groups of pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of progress and achievement in writing for pupils across the school.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Acklam Whin Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS5 8SQ

It was a great pleasure for myself and Mrs Buller to visit your school because you made us so very welcome. You are very well mannered and extremely helpful. I know you truly care about your school and each other. I was impressed with your confidence and with the way you listen to each other's views in lessons and share good ideas. I was delighted to see the excellent way you behave in school. My discussion with older pupils led me to understand that everyone in school feels safe because pupils look after each other well. The school rabbit is especially well cared for. It is kind of older pupils to help younger ones by listening to their reading to help them learn more quickly. You certainly know how to stay healthy and the number of you who join school sport clubs is amazing. You also show great kindness towards children in many parts of the world. You are good ambassadors for your school both locally and internationally and have good links with schools in far away places.

Your school is a good school. Your headteacher, staff and governors ensure that your school is a successful and very caring place. Teachers make lessons fun so you are all keen to listen, concentrate well and work hard. This is why you do so well year after year. I like the way you use different coloured 'Thinking Hats' to consider different types of ideas. You are very confident that teachers and assistants are always there to help you if you get stuck so no one gets left behind. The way your teachers mark your work is very helpful and the way you assess your own work is impressive. Many of you showed me how much your work had improved since September. You certainly enjoy the challenging activities especially the 'I can do maths' sessions. I also noticed many of you using the exotic vocabulary displayed on your classroom walls to help make your writing lively and interesting. Nevertheless some of you are not doing as well in writing as you are in science and mathematics so I have asked the school to look more closely at this aspect of English. You in turn must try even harder at your writing.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at school and that you continue to work hard so you are ready for the next school.

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector