

Bankfields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111604
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	325410
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

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)	300
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	Mr John Dale
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Hirst
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	Mansfield Road Eston Middlesbrough TS6 0RZ
Telephone number	01642 453157
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Bankfields is an above average sized primary school serving the Eston area within Redcar and Cleveland local authority. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above that found nationally. A higher-than-average number of pupils have a learning difficulty and/or disability, while an average proportion of those children have a statement of special educational need. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. The governing body manage a breakfast-and-after-school club on the school site and a small number of children from the school attend this provision. The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including the Healthy Schools Standard; Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bankfields is a good school and the care, guidance and support provided to pupils are outstanding. Pupils develop into thoughtful, confident and well behaved young people during their time here and their personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. The good and determined leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior managers, has realised their vision of an inclusive school that raises pupils' aspirations, achievement and broadens their horizons. Staff work hard to remove the barriers some pupils face in their learning and go out of their way to make sure all pupils get an equal opportunity to take a full part in all the school has to offer. Such a focus means that not only do pupils enjoy their time at Bankfields; they attend well and make good progress in their learning. The gap in ability between boys and girls that is clearly evident when they enter Nursery has virtually closed by the time pupils leave school at the age of 11. Indeed, in 2008, boys' performance in mathematics exceeded that of the girls.

Pupils enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are below and sometimes well below that typical for their age, particularly boys. They make a good start and are well prepared for their entry into Key Stage 1. Despite this good start, pupils have generally still not caught up with pupils nationally by the end of Key Stage 1. Their attainment has varied over recent years and was below average in 2008. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain average standards in their English and mathematics national tests; representing good progress given their starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the effective interventions and support provided to them by the special educational needs coordinator, teachers and well trained and well-deployed teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A common thread running through all lessons is the very good relationships between pupils and teachers which help to make sure pupils are ready and willing to learn. Teachers' use of individual pupil targets, which are checked regularly and which pupils understand, alongside the very good quality marking, provides pupils with a clear knowledge of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Occasionally, in the few satisfactory lessons, this good information is not used well enough to make sure teaching is always matched to the needs of more able children and as a result, their progress slows.

Teaching is well supported by the good curriculum. Pupils say they enjoy the many trips and additional activities they can participate in. The outstanding art curriculum provides an impressive range of pupils' work which is displayed across the school; celebrating their significant achievements in this subject and the richness of experiences that pupils are offered and can reflect upon. While the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is also good, opportunities for children to extend their play, exploration and investigative skills in the outdoor area are not as well-developed as those indoors.

Partnerships with other agencies are strong, particularly those secured to support the most vulnerable pupils and their families and those that enrich pupils' experiences. The school works hard to develop successful partnerships with parents and the local community. The school's Local Learning Centre enables parents to join in and support their children's and their own learning, for example, through the arts, sport and family learning. Parents take part in the many theme weeks the school organises and these are well attended. The most recent Arts week saw dads building a great outdoor space to display the beautiful wood carvings pupils made. Around

a quarter of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education and care their children receive. A third of those who responded made very positive additional comments, particularly in terms of the approachability of the headteacher and staff and the progress their children are making. A very small minority made more negative comments including a few who spoke to inspectors. Some think bullying is an issue. Pupils who spoke to inspectors indicated that while bullying did take place, often in the form of name calling, once any adult is informed it is quickly dealt with.

Senior leaders have successfully tackled the few areas requiring improvement since the last inspection. This, together with the strong team ethos amongst the staff, is improving standards, and the good progress that pupils make from the time they enter school to the time they leave indicates the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with a range of skills and abilities below and sometimes well-below those commonly seen in others of their age, especially boys. Communication, language and literacy skills are particularly weak as are aspects of their personal and social development and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Teachers' regular assessment of children's work, good teaching and an effective curriculum ensure they make good progress in all areas of learning so that, by the end of the reception year, their attainment is nearer to the average expected, although still below that for boys. Staff know and care for their children well and this helps to assure that their welfare and personal development are well-promoted. This results in children feeling safe and happy in a warm, secure and welcoming atmosphere. Staff pay special attention to the specific needs of children who need extra help, especially those with behavioural or learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This ensures they too make good progress from their starting points. There is good balance between activities in classes that adults lead and those that children choose for themselves. Consequently, many children learn to work and play independently as well as collaboratively while they enjoy their learning. However, the range of activities and opportunities for children to explore and experiment outdoors is more limited. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and staff have high levels of expertise and experience. Self-assessment is thorough and has been successful in identifying areas for improvement which have been acted on tenaciously. Staff, for example, are developing further the process of monitoring and observing children at work and play to make sure that activities are always precisely matched to each child's needs to help them develop the next steps in their learning and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a wider range of stimulating and challenging outdoor activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Iron out the few inconsistencies in lessons to ensure pupil's individual assessment information is always used to challenge the most able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has fluctuated over recent years, from well below average to broadly average. In 2008, it was below average overall, particularly in the proportion achieving higher levels. However, attainment was in line with that found in similar schools

nationally. The school's focus on raising pupils' achievement is tackling this variation and current assessments, evidence from lesson observations and pupils' work, show that the proportion of children attaining average levels and above is increasing.

The effective building blocks developed earlier ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress and, by the age of 11, reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. National comparative data shows that the progress pupils make from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 taking account of the results of English and mathematics tests combined, places the school well within the top quarter of all schools nationally. Aspirational Key Stage 2 targets are set for pupils and they generally meet or exceed them. The school's current assessment of pupils work shows that standards have risen well this year, including the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels. Strong action has been taken to raise standards in science following disappointing results in 2008 and most children are now reaching at least expected levels in this subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of leading healthy and active lives and are proud of their involvement in a wide range of sports. Older pupils feel that what they learn in school prepares them well to make healthy choices as teenagers. The Healthy Caf , run by Year 6, is an opportunity to take on leadership roles in school in addition to being school councillors and playground leaders for younger pupils. Behaviour is good and lessons run smoothly because all staff in the school are consistent in what they expect of the way pupils treat each other. Pupils, in turn, follow their example and independently resolve minor disagreements that may arise. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and feel able to approach any member of staff with a problem. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is good compared with similar schools because special theme weeks and visits out of school mean pupils want to miss as little time as possible. 'The climbing helped me overcome my fear' and 'I will remember the singing forever' are typical comments. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Both in lessons and assemblies, pupils reflect on the bigger issues in life and support many charities such as the local children's hospice and a child in Africa, as part of understanding and serving communities beyond their own.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships between children and teachers, pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning typify all lessons. In the best lessons, teachers' effective planning, good use of information and communication technology (ICT), a lively pace and lots of interesting and varied activities help pupils to enjoy their time in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Pupils are adept at working independently or cooperatively and are supportive and helpful of each other. They are becoming increasingly skilled in evaluating their own work and that of their peers. In the few satisfactory lessons seen, teachers did not always pitch their work precisely enough to meet the needs of some of the more able pupils and in these lessons their progress slowed. Nevertheless, these pupils remained on task and worked diligently. Senior managers monitor the quality of teaching regularly, both formally and informally and are always taking action to make sure any deficiencies in teaching are quickly tackled through training

support and guidance. This has helped to successfully increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum along with a wide range of additional activities captures children's interest, imagination and broadens their horizons. Pupils talk about the lasting memories created by projects, working with parents and artists to provide a stimulating environment in which to learn. Senior leaders continue to adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs and interests. For example, the topics and activities chosen alongside interesting visits and visitors successfully keep boys interested in learning. Leaders have also made significant changes to the teaching of English and mathematics over recent years and this is making a positive difference to pupils' achievements in these subjects. Whether filming on the coast, following a 'mathematics-trail' or reading in the 'Gruffalo's cave', pupils have many opportunities to practise the basic skills they learn in lessons and which add greatly to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding because the staff are deeply committed to ensuring that they are secure and happy. Teaching assistants are particularly skilled and well deployed to ensure pupils who find learning or concentration difficult can make the most of all that the curriculum has to offer. All staff keep a constant and watchful eye on those pupils who need special support at certain times in their lives. Attendance is good because the school has rigorous systems in place to check on any pupils who are absent and uses class attendance charts and 'Beat the clock' certificates to help them to miss as little time as possible. Teachers track pupils' progress rigorously and regularly and use this information to set them challenging targets. Pupils say the objectives for each lesson help them take small steps towards achieving these and they value the detailed marking of their work that celebrates their achievements and is sharply focused on what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Team leaders and subject leaders' leadership roles have improved since the last inspection and are now good. They and senior managers are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Staff are held to account well through effective performance management arrangements that link explicitly to improvements in the attainment of specific children who may be not making as much progress as their peers. The headteacher encourages the involvement of all staff in the school's improvement and as a result they have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This accurate self-evaluation supports the determination of school improvement priorities that are tackled tenaciously. For example, disappointment in pupils' performance in science in 2008 has led to actions that have improved their progress in this subject significantly this year.

Arrangements for health and safety and safeguarding children are in place and meet current requirements. Community cohesion is promoted well. Through the curriculum, especially religious education, sport, art, music and additional experiences, pupils understanding of the local

community, its diversity and their role within it are developing successfully. Staff are extending pupils' understanding of global and cultural diversity effectively, for example, through the multi-cultural theme weeks. However, they are aware that pupils have more limited understanding of the diversity of communities across the country and a specific theme week, planned for late in the summer term, aims to increase further their understanding.

Governance is satisfactory and improving. Governors are very supportive of the school and are developing their role in using information and questioning to challenge the senior management team more effectively. Their monitoring of the financial arrangements of the school is robust and the school secures good value for money.

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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?	2
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	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?	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?	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?	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	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 Bankfields Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS6 0RZ

Thank you for making the team so welcome when we visited your school. We were impressed with your good behaviour and helpfulness. A special thank you to those of you who spoke to us during the inspection, it was interesting to hear your views and the views of your parents who completed the inspection questionnaire. Nearly everyone who responded said how happy they were with quality of education and care you receive. A small number of parents had a couple of concerns. For example a few believe that bullying is an issue. You told us that while some bullying takes place, often in the form of name calling, if you tell an adult, they will tackle the issue straight away. We believe Bankfields is a good school and the care, support and guidance you are provided with is outstanding, as is your understanding of how to live healthy lives. The quality of your art work is excellent. Aspects of the school we judge to be good, include:

- the progress you make in your learning from the time you enter Nursery to the time you leave when you are 11
- your personal, social, emotional, spiritual, moral and cultural development
- your attendance and behaviour and your attitudes to learning
- the relationships between teachers and yourselves and the care and thoughtfulness you have for each other and adults in school
- the curriculum and the very many activities that you can take part in that you say help you to enjoy school – such as the ‘math-trail’, the Arts-week and the range of before school, lunch-time and after-school activities.

To improve your school further we have asked your school to make sure the outdoor activities in the Early Years Foundation Unit are as interesting as they are indoors and to make sure lessons always challenge those of you who find learning easy.

Once again, thank you for help and friendliness and on behalf of the team, I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty’s Inspector