

Barnard Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111617
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	325416
Inspection date	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Joy Frost 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)	310
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 Michael Kay
Headteacher	Mr Barry Lennard
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barnard Grove Hartlepool TS24 9SD
Telephone number	01429 230300
Fax number	01429 230301

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The quality of provision in the new Early Years Foundation Stage Unit.
- The progress of boys in Key Stage 1 and higher attaining girls in Key Stage 2.
- The care, guidance and support offered to pupils.
- How effectively the leadership and management monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

This is a larger than average primary school on the outskirts of Hartlepool situated in an area of severe social and economic deprivation. The pupils are mostly of White British heritage, with few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is above the national average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 with some exemplary features. The outstanding care, guidance and support the school offers is the cornerstone which enables pupils to become mature and confident young people who have very positive attitudes to learning and who achieve extremely well. Parents' views are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its work.

Children's skills and knowledge when they enter the school are well below that expected for their age. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit enables them to make good progress and enter Year 1 with many having made great strides in their language, mathematical and social development. Throughout Key Stage 1 the school rightly concentrates on laying good foundations for learning in reading, writing and mathematics. This results in pupils making up even more ground and attaining near to national expectations at the end of Year 2 assessments, although writing still lags behind, especially for boys. In Key Stage 2 progress accelerates so that pupils leave the school with attainment in English, mathematics and science which is consistently above that found nationally. In the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds pupils' progress in English and mathematics was in the top 5% of all schools. This represents outstanding progress from their very low starting points.

Pupils' personal development is excellent and the school promotes their well-being extremely well. From entry to the Nursery to Year 6, pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and activities, and take real pride in their school. Year 6 pupils exemplified these aspects in a 'Dragon's Den' style presentation to business leaders from a local firm. They confidently explained their product proposals, illustrated in screened presentations, and answered skilfully probing questions about their business plans. Such activities reflect how well the pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education, and their future working lives.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent so that lessons and other activities run very smoothly. They actively take on the school's messages about living healthy lifestyles and their social and moral development is outstanding. They understand and can explain the difference between right and wrong, and they work and play together very successfully. Against this backdrop, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community, added to by their willing involvement as playground helpers and members of the school council. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good, reinforced through art and music, and in studying such topics as the rainforest. The school has worked tirelessly to improve attendance, and the pupils are currently on track to meet this year's ambitious target.

Teaching and learning are good overall, and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are well planned, have a brisk pace and are clearly aimed at meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. School organisation has been well planned so that pupils are placed in classes according to their level of attainment. Pupils who need more support with their learning are well served by experienced and knowledgeable teaching assistants who work alongside teachers both in the classroom, and when necessary, in small withdrawal groups. Teachers who are at the beginning of their career, or who are new to the school, are offered good support from more experienced staff. Currently, the marking of pupils' work is thorough and detailed, although opportunities for children to respond to the comments are limited.

The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are outstanding. All the required safeguarding, health and safety and child protection procedures are in place. The staff is vigilant in ensuring that children are safe, and that they understand the importance of behaving safely.

Senior leaders ensure that all staff are fully trained in the most recent child protection guidance, and are aware of the potential needs of vulnerable or allergic pupils. Early identification of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leads to prompt and focused support to help them make progress. Gifted and talented pupils are also identified and supported effectively. The staff use records of pupils' progress well to identify groups or individuals needing specifically focused intervention in their learning, and to set effective and challenging targets.

The curriculum is good. It supports the school's drive to raise standards and offers many opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills across the curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors, make learning more interesting and meaningful, for example, pupils regularly take part in role-play through topics such as the Victorians, Florence Nightingale, and the Year 6 enterprise initiative. A themed approach enables pupils to make good links between subject areas and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is a strong feature. Some elements of the curriculum are still at an early stage of development, for example, opportunities to learn the ukulele and Taiko drumming for all pupils, were only introduced in September.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. The headteacher, ably supported by two assistant headteachers, has set a very clear direction for the school which is understood by staff, pupils and parents. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are very effective and include staff at all levels. Middle leaders are knowledgeable about standards and achievement in their subject areas and lead their teams well. There is a sense of real teamwork amongst the staff who are constantly endeavouring to bring about improvements. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has identified what should be done next to improve further. The governing body supports and challenges the work of the school well and the chair of governors and the headteacher work closely together to ensure sound financial management. They acknowledge that their improvement plan currently has too many initiatives and that some planned actions do not have clear enough measurable success criteria. Nevertheless, the rise in standards and achievement over a number of years shows that they have made excellent improvement since the last inspection and have an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes is good and children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They are very safe and very well cared for by the staff who provide a wealth of learning opportunities that engage the children in all the areas of learning. The staff keep detailed records of their assessment observations and use these well to plan activities that challenge children to make good and sometimes outstanding progress. At this early stage of the year, newly registered children are already settled into school. They learn effectively through a range of choices that stimulate their imagination, develop their independence and set them problems to solve. Older children are clearly very happy, confidently choosing tasks and play opportunities, often working in pairs or groups. During a rain shower, the leading teacher asked some children if they could duct the water from the water tray into a puddle. They concentrated well on building an 'aqueduct' using pieces of pipe and guttering, and were delighted when they were successful in completing the task.

The setting is well led and managed, and the relationship between staff and parents is very strong. A good start has been made on making best use of the newly linked EYFS unit. However, ready access to the good outdoor provision for all the children is not yet in place.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing across Key Stage 1, especially for boys.
- Provide ready access to the outdoor learning area for all children.

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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	1

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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	3
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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**

1 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnard Grove Primary School, Hartlepool, TS24 9SD

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave Mr Jackson and I when we visited your school recently to see how well you were doing. We think that Barnard Grove is a good school with some outstanding features. This is what we found:

- Your behaviour is exemplary.
- Your teachers care and guide you very well.
- As you go through the school you develop into mature and caring young people.
- You achieve very well in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave the school.
- The youngest children get a very good start to their education.
- The atmosphere in school is excellent because you develop very good relationships with the staff and each other and this helps you to learn.

I know that Mr Jackson was very impressed with the Year 6 'Dragon's Den' enterprise day. He thought that you did an excellent job of presenting your products to the business people from Corus.

We have asked Mr Lennard and the governors to make the following improvements which will make your school even better. We think that you need to improve writing in Key Stage 1, especially for those boys who are not yet secure in their letter sounds. We would also like to make sure that children in the Foundation Stage Unit have ready access to the outdoor play area instead of having to go through the hall.

You can all help your teachers to make these improvements by attending school every day and continuing to work as hard as you do!

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Frost

Her Majesty's Inspector