

# Pentland Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111642
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	325421
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	338
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robin Hart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Campbell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Pentland Avenue Billingham TS23 2RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 559609
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 360235

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This above average sized primary school serves families in central Billingham, a locality with marked social disadvantage. A well above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The school has a small specialist unit for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The overall proportions of pupils with learning difficulties, and those with a statement of special educational need, are broadly average. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is in the Nursery and Reception Years.

## 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 provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Some aspects of its work are good. The headteacher and his recently enhanced leadership team provide sound educational direction to the school's work for all staff. A particular strength is that together they successfully promote the school's values of care and consideration and foster the philosophy that every child does matter. This is an inclusive school which actively opposes discrimination. It caters satisfactorily for pupils with different backgrounds including those with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities supported through a special unit.

Pupils' accomplishments reflect satisfactory achievement and good personal development. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and are helped to play a full part in school life. The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall. The school forges effective partnerships with parents and the local authority to support pupils' well-being. Many parents have confidence in the school and value the information and feedback they receive about their children's progress. One parent's comment sums up their views: 'My children both settled into school immediately and are thriving. All the staff at the school are always pleasant and helpful. They all do a very good job!'

A good curriculum, with well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom, helps pupils to develop good personal qualities. Pupils talk informatively about the importance of diet and exercise to a healthy lifestyle. The school deservedly holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Both in and out of lessons pupils behave well and act safely, sensibly and courteously. They work enthusiastically and thoroughly enjoy school, especially practical activities. A successful strategy has improved attendance which is now at the national average. Pupils are delighted when they do well and happily share the success of others. They contribute in several ways to their school and wider community and are adequately prepared for their future education.

Pupils' achievement in their time in school is satisfactory overall. They get off to a good start in the EYFS. However, their progress falters in Key Stage 1. In the 2008 statutory assessments standards fell to below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2 progress picks up and pupils reach average standards. Standards in the Year 6 assessments rose in 2007 to be broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school sustained these standards at Level 4 in 2008 but in writing and mathematics fewer more able pupils reached the higher Level 5 than anticipated. Teaching is satisfactory. Although information about pupils' progress is gathered diligently and used effectively to help those slipping behind, it is not being used sufficiently well to support all more able pupils to reach the higher standards. Whilst some pupils are doing well as a result of more effective teaching, teachers' marking is not consistently helpful in giving all pupils pointers and targets for improvement.

The leadership team, working with the recently enhanced governing body, has addressed concerns raised at the last inspection although there is scope for further improvement. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources and achieves satisfactory value for money. Governors and senior leaders are strongly committed to raising standards and this, together with the school's track record of progress over the recent past, indicates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage effectively helps children make good progress. Children enter the Nursery with abilities and skills below those typical for children of this age. Their language skills are particularly weak. By the end of the Reception Year, children's skills in all areas of learning are in line with or above those expected of children of their age, except in reading and calculating which are below those expected. The school very effectively fosters children's personal, social and emotional development. Parents are delighted that their children settle quickly and, as a result of good support and care, children soon become established and develop qualities such as confidence, kindness and respect. They are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. Children are safe and secure because well qualified staff ensure that welfare requirements are given due importance. Good teaching ensures children are interested and fully engaged in a wide range of activities which offer many appropriate opportunities, in and out-of doors, for children to develop independence and initiate their own learning. These are well balanced with activities led by adults to extend children's learning. Good leadership has improved the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment. Teachers clearly draw upon their informative records of children's progress to plan activities for them. Teachers and assistants work very effectively together to make good use of the facilities available. Arrangements to support transition into Year 1 are developing well. Parents value the weekly newsletter which is strengthening the link between children's learning in school and at home.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure all teachers consistently use targets and give points for improvement when marking pupils' work.
- Extend arrangements for support to ensure more able pupils in Key Stage 2 make the progress and achievement expected of them in mathematics and writing.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. From starting points that are broadly average when they begin Year 1, they reach average standards by Year 6. However, progress during Key Stage 1 is too slow and standards in the statutory assessments in Year 2 have slipped to below average in recent years. Progress improves in Key Stage 2. Standards in English, mathematics and science rose in 2007 from below average to average. The school sustained similar standards in 2008 although results are yet to be validated. Standards in reading rose again in 2008, but were counterbalanced by a fall in writing standards. The school met its challenging targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 in English and mathematics but fell short at the higher Level 5 target in both subjects. Standards at Level 5 in English were lower than predicted because more able pupils did not do well enough in writing. By the time they leave school, differences between boys' and girls' attainment have been ironed out. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities all achieve satisfactorily to reach standards comparable with their

counterparts nationally. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are working at levels expected for their age.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils understand the needs of others and develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils have a good understanding of how to remain healthy through appropriate choices in diet and by taking plenty of exercise. They have a good understanding of the need for personal safety and they look after their own welfare, such as when using the internet and crossing roads. Enthusiasm and full involvement characterise pupils' enjoyment of school. They keenly contribute their ideas and solutions. Pupils behave very well in lessons and outside where they are considerate towards others' enjoyment. Pupils are proud of their contributions to school life and its environment. They also contribute willingly to charitable causes. They are eager to be chosen for roles of responsibility such as monitors, playground buddies and school councillors, because they know these things help to improve their school. Contributions to local life and beyond are satisfactory and a school priority is to extend its network of community links. Although pupils build on many opportunities for team-working, their experience of enterprise is limited. With average basic skills they are satisfactorily prepared for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn are put to good use. In these lessons, teachers have realistic and ambitious expectations of pupils. They provide activities that match pupils' needs and build on their earlier work. Pupils enjoy being challenged, and are strongly motivated to work hard both independently or in groups. They are enthusiastic contributors in skilfully managed discussions. This consolidates their learning well. Occasionally, when work is too easy, the pace of learning and of progress slows. Higher attaining pupils in particular are not challenged sufficiently and do not achieve as much as they could. Marking diligently follows the school's principles to praise pupils' accomplishments, although points for improvement are sometimes unclear or not followed through. Marking is inconsistent in the way it relates to pupils' targets set for their work. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully plan effective support for pupils who need additional help, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The well-planned curriculum allows pupils to benefit from a wide and balanced range of activities in all subjects. Provision for basic skills is satisfactory. Recent improvements to the teaching of reading, such as phonics work with younger pupils, oral work, as well as reading activities are now having a positive impact on language development. A greater emphasis on writing in other subjects is also helping to raise standards in literacy. The school's promotion of art and design, music and dance are recognised by the award of the Artsmark. Some excellent artwork

is displayed. Visits and visitors to school further enrich pupils' skills and understanding. Along with a good range of popular extra-curricular activities and time at a residential outdoor activities centre, these help develop team-building skills and add to pupils' good spiritual, physical, social and cultural development. Links with schools in Spain, Italy and Finland widen pupils' perspectives on life outside Britain and foster community cohesion, but their knowledge and understanding of a multi-cultural society within the United Kingdom are underdeveloped.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school carefully fosters an ethos of consideration and respect and, in turn, key aspects of care and support for pupils are good. The school meets requirements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, for example, through its arrangements for child protection, health and safety and recruiting staff. Pupils say they feel safe in school because adults deal with any problems quickly. Staff make good links with parents, who are made welcome in the school. The school ensures systems are in place to give additional support to pupils who need it. Satisfactory links with external agencies help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make the same progress as other pupils. Procedures for noting and acting on information about pupils' academic performance are satisfactory. They lead to appropriate help for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make satisfactory progress. However, these procedures are not used sufficiently well to ensure that the more able pupils reach levels expected of them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new senior leadership team works well together and school self-evaluation is accurate. Senior staff and middle managers monitor the school's work diligently. They ensure that the professional development of staff is aligned to the school's needs, for example, training to help teachers improve pupils' literacy. Measures taken since the last inspection have improved pupils' attendance, which is now at the national average. Although the school's self-evaluation does not focus sharply on evidence for success, development planning sets appropriate priorities with actions to raise standards and achievement. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths in relation to pupils' personal development, and a very strong determination to improve academic standards. They set challenging targets for the whole school based on satisfactory tracking of pupils' progress. Governors ensure that the school is competently managed and that it meets all statutory requirements. There is satisfactory promotion of community cohesion, though the school could do more to promote global awareness and commitment.

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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?	3
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?	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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	3
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**

23 January 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Pentland Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS23 2RG

Mrs Cochrane, Mr Watson and I really enjoyed our recent visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you who we met. You are well behaved, work well in lessons and play well together outside. We were pleased to see how much you like to take part enthusiastically in activities during and after school, how you value the help you get and the friendships you make. We were pleased to see how you contribute to school life, for example as school councillors and buddies, and how you help others less fortunate than you. I know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. It is warm, welcoming and well organised. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy.

Last year, many children in the Nursery and Reception classes made good progress, but some struggled with reading and mathematics. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 did not make as much progress as we expected. We have asked teachers to help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to reach higher standards. Pupils who left Year 6 last year made satisfactory progress throughout their time in school. They did well in reading but not so well in writing, especially at the highest level. We have asked your teachers in Years 3 to 6 to help you all so as many of you as possible can reach the highest levels in mathematics and particularly in writing.

We were delighted to see how you take care to make your work neat. When your teachers mark your books they always tell you how well you are doing. On occasions they suggest ways to help you improve. I have suggested that whenever they mark your books your teachers help you be clear about what you need to do to improve your work in all your subjects.

You have many opportunities at Pentland Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector