

Bowburn Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114088
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325939
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2008
Reporting inspector	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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	152
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 Heather Kelly
Headteacher	Miss Christine Ormerod
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wylam Street Bowburn Durham County Durham DH6 5BE
Telephone number	0191 3770606
Fax number	0191 3770606

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Infant school and Nursery serves a village community to the south of Durham city. Once a mining area, it is an economically disadvantaged locality with an above average number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British families. A small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are learning to speak English. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational need are broadly average.

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 where several aspects of the education it provides are outstanding. All staff successfully foster the principle that every child does matter and clearly promote the school's philosophy that, 'We are all different but we are all special'. The headteacher provides clear educational direction to the school's work. Children greatly benefit from outstanding provision in the Nursery and Reception classes, from good teaching, a rich curriculum, exceptional pastoral care and good guidance and support. The school forges very effective partnerships with the local authority and especially with parents to support pupils' well-being. Parents have confidence in the school. Several parents of new starters comment on how well their children have settled. One parent sums up their views. 'My son has made great progress since starting school last year. The teachers have always made time if I have had any questions or concerns and done all they can to assist in making my son happy when he is at school'. This is a very inclusive school which makes an outstanding contribution to foster cohesion in the community.

Children begin in the Nursery with very low skills and abilities for their age. They make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress through Years 1 and 2. Results in the Year 2 statutory assessments were broadly average in 2007 and are of a similar standard this year. In 2007, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did broadly the same as their counterparts nationally and this year analysis shows most have done better than expected. Pupils who are learning English reach very high standards. When taking all pupils' backgrounds and starting points into account, most pupils make good progress, which reflects good achievement.

Pupils behave well in lessons and assemblies. They act safely and very sensibly in and out-of-doors. They are confident and polite. They enjoy school, are delighted when they do well and happily share the success of others. The school rigorously monitors absence but, despite prompt and determined action, attendance stubbornly remains broadly average. Pupils have a good grasp of the need for sleep, healthy eating and the importance of physical activities. They contribute exceptionally well in many ways to their school and wider community. Effective partnership with the Junior school, very well developed social skills and sound basic skills ensure pupils are well prepared for their future.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The school accurately identifies priorities for raising achievement. The leadership team and governing body have successfully fostered key improvements, notably to the Early Years Foundation Stage, where their resolve to improve provision has paid dividends. They ensure information about pupils' performance is used well to guide and support anyone at risk of falling behind. They set challenging targets at whole school level. Although teachers let pupils know how well they are doing, the school knows they are not sufficiently systematic or consistent in helping all pupils know clearly what they are able to accomplish and how to improve. Pupils' mathematical development is not sufficiently emphasised in leadership priorities and curriculum planning and, in turn, activities in some lessons are not sufficiently well arranged so pupils learn in simple steps. The school provides good value for money and, taking this and its clear track record of progress into account, it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Parents are very pleased with the respect and care shown to their children and are proud of the progress they make. A well-established system of visits, backed by useful documentation, eases the transition from home to school. Children settle quickly and their confidence soon grows. They respond extremely positively to the exciting indoor and outdoor environments and to the absorbing and appropriate practical activities staff arrange for them. Teaching is outstanding in both Nursery and Reception. Children are encouraged to make sensible choices and participate fully because staff support them with excellent commentaries, questions and explanations and ensure consistency and progression throughout. Staff emphasise courtesy and consideration throughout the day which, with well established routines, enable children to form positive relationships. Well-equipped facilities for Nursery and Reception are organised so that children develop abilities to learn independently. When children begin Nursery most have skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age, particularly in language skills and personal development. By the end of Reception, the majority of children this year reached the goals expected of them and some exceeded expectations. This outstanding achievement is the result of a high standard of care, rigorous assessment and diligent support, which identifies individual learning needs and ensures individuals make excellent progress. The very effective leadership is characterised by accurate self-review and determination to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure marking in Years 1 and 2 consistently gives pupils a precise and clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Give prominence to the leadership of mathematics and boost its development throughout the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. From the time when they join the Nursery with skills and abilities that are much lower than those typically seen in children of the same age, they reach average standards by the end of Year 2.

Standards in the 2007 statutory assessments were broadly average. This year a similar proportion of pupils gained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. A smaller proportion of pupils attained at the higher level than in 2007. Overall, however, pupils' progress was good taking their individual capabilities into account. Most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning to speak English make good progress and achieve well as a result of very effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is excellent, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel secure in school, act sensibly and know how to keep themselves safe. They speak warmly of how 'everyone is a friend' and say bullying is rare and dealt with firmly. Pupils value the school's rewards system and are highly motivated to succeed. They work very well together and their general behaviour in and out of lessons is good. The

importance of exercise, nutritious food and sleep in order to stay healthy is understood and acted upon. School is an enjoyable place to be and pupils speak enthusiastically about celebration assemblies, playtime activities using the new facilities and kind teachers who make learning fun. Responsibility is welcomed and many pupils keenly take on the role of milk and fruit monitors, playtime buddies and school council representatives. Pupils say they are listened to and they very much appreciate improvements which have incorporated their ideas. Their attitudes to community projects and to charity fundraising are very positive and their work within the International Schools Project helps them to value diversity and widens their understanding of the world. Their very well developed social skills and sound basic skills prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Effective collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants ensures pupils make good progress and achieve well. Adults have good relationships with pupils, who in turn respond well to their expectations of them. Classroom routines are well established and, in turn, pupils settle quickly to work. In the better lessons, activities are well organised and interesting. Pupils become very involved, contribute willingly when asked skilfully posed questions, and learn well. In others though, the teachers' expectations of what pupils should do are not high enough and the activities provided do not promote steps in learning, particularly in some mathematics lessons seen where pupils do not make as much progress as they could. While most teachers make clear to pupils what they will learn and what they need to do to improve, this approach is not consistently applied throughout the school. For example, when marking books in Years 1 and 2 teachers congratulate pupils on their accomplishments but are not methodical in giving precise or clear ways for them to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully designed to promote and encourage pupils to become successful and confident learners and successfully fosters their personal development. It takes good account of the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English. An extensive range of educational visits and visitors to school enrich the curriculum. Awards, including the National Healthy Schools Award, International Schools Award and Artsmark Gold, reflect the major contribution the curriculum makes to promoting excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to fostering community cohesion. The school is making the curriculum more relevant and interesting by combining different subject areas into themes. Opportunities to develop literacy, science and skills from most other subjects are identified, although mathematics lacks the prominence it should have. Many pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in the wide range of arts-based and physical activities available after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is excellent and other aspects of guidance and support are good. Pupils perceive school as a welcoming place and find adults very approachable. As a result they feel safe, secure

and happy. Policies and practice for safeguarding pupils' welfare meet statutory requirements; child protection and health and safety are paramount. Staff training is regularly reviewed and up-to-date.

Academic guidance is good. The school now has a rigorous system to track and analyse pupils' progress and to set class targets which are incorporated into lesson plans. This approach is not yet fully effective and the school is making changes to improve its use of assessment to promote learning. The school ensures pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are identified at an early stage. It works well with outside agencies to secure appropriate resources to support their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management very successfully promote the ethos and very positive climate for learning which ensures equality of opportunity for all. The headteacher and senior leaders show great commitment and determination to develop and improve the school. A particularly strong feature is the highest priority governors and leaders give to enhancing the community the school serves by promoting partnerships with parents and families. Governance is good. Governors have a very clear knowledge of the school, although they have yet to develop their role in systematically gaining a first hand view of the school's work. The school's broadly accurate self-evaluation and the priority given to raising standards are clear in its development plan. Well laid out activities aim to improve pupils' literacy skills and personal well-being but the leadership of mathematical development has a noticeably lower profile. The school sets challenging targets at whole school level but acknowledges the approach is not yet specific enough to accelerate some pupils' progress. Good quality leadership and management contribute to pupils achieving well and indicate the school gives good value for money. The school's determination and well thought through strategies, which have already markedly improved pupils' academic progress and personal development in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection, bode well for further improvement.

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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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	3
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?	2

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?	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	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**

15 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bowburn Infant School, Durham, DH6 5BE

Mrs Elton 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. We did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. You were very polite and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school and especially to hear how you like to take part in activities during and after school. You value the help you get and the friendships you make. You are well behaved and polite to others in lessons and outside and help your local community.

Your school gives you a good education and in many ways it is excellent. It is warm and welcoming. All the adults in the school look after you well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Many children in the Nursery and Reception classes make outstanding progress and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. We were especially pleased to see that pupils who get extra help did equally well. When we looked at your books we saw how teachers tell you how well you are doing but they do not always tell you how to improve. When we were in some mathematics lessons we found the work you were given very easy for some of you and it did not help you to learn as much as you could have done. We have asked your school to improve these things.

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

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector