

Aycliffe Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114101
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325945
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	119
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 Susan Hindle
Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Gargan
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aycliffe Village Newton Aycliffe County Durham DL5 6JL
Telephone number	01325 300227
Fax number	01325 320263

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average and most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. An independent provider runs a before and after school club, as well as a Nursery on the premises.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Aycliffe Village Primary School provides good quality education and good value for money. Some of its features are outstanding, especially pupil's personal development and the enrichment of the curriculum. Many parents returned the questionnaire; a typical comment was, 'The school has a lovely atmosphere, relationships between staff and children are good, there is respect for each other and the children thrive'. Teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that pupils receive are all of a good quality. The school is an energetic community providing a purposeful environment in which pupils say they enjoy school.

Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is excellent. They have positive attitudes and enjoy learning, which is demonstrated by their good attendance. Good progress in basic skills ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is well promoted through the wide range of stimulating and challenging opportunities. Pupils develop a very good sense of community spirit and willingly take part in activities such as raising funds for local charities and litter picking around the village.

Pupils make good progress in their work and achieve well. They make a good start in the Reception class and enter Year 1 with standards just above average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that, by the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above the national average. However, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, often by skilled teaching assistants. This accounts for their good achievement.

Pupils' achievement across the school is good because of the quality of teaching. In lessons, there is good pace, teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and ask good questions to extend pupils' language and move pupils on. The school is good at meeting the needs of pupils who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The most able pupils, however, are not always sufficiently challenged to enable them to reach the higher levels. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in residential activities. These activities help to raise their awareness of the different needs of peoples and life experiences that ensure they are well equipped for their future life. A broad and balanced curriculum gives pupils extensive opportunities to develop their awareness of the wider world giving learning a clear purpose and context.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. The headteacher and other leaders ensure that the school runs smoothly and that school improvement is clearly and soundly based in good evaluation of the school's outcomes. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are used effectively but as yet they are not rigorous enough to ensure that issues for pupils needing additional support and challenge are pinpointed as they arise. Governors provide good guidance and keep a good balance between offering support to the school and challenging it to do even better. The school's involvement in the local community and its success in extending pupils' awareness of other beliefs and ways of life show its good contribution to community cohesion. Effective improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start for children at the school. Children's love of learning begins in the Reception class where they are well nurtured and cared for in a safe environment. Children quickly settle and are happy because of the excellent induction programme. Children enter the Reception class with levels of basic skills that are often below age-related expectations, particularly in mathematical development and physical development, but this varies from year to year. Teaching and learning are good because adults assess children regularly and plan exciting activities that closely match children's needs. This means that by the start of Year 1, some children are reaching levels that are above those expected with strengths in communication, language and literacy development and particularly in the excellent personal, social and emotional development.

The use of both inside and outside areas means that children widen their learning experience and they grow in their desire to explore and be independent. Children make good progress in their speaking and listening. For example, they talked confidently about the bread they were making for sandwiches in the bakery. Children delighted in looking for the Gingerbread Man, unsure whether he was in the sand or whether he had wandered outside. Discussions with each other helped the search. Children enjoy painting and they could explain well what they intended to paint and why they had chosen to mix paint until they found the right colour. Leadership and management are good, ensuring that planning reflects an understanding of how young children learn. This provides the children with a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities and a good balance between adult led and child initiated play. As a result, children gain in confidence, are independent and behave well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place greater emphasis on the challenge for more able pupils to ensure that their work always matches their abilities.
- Ensure that tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous so that there is clearer identification of those needing additional support or challenge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school is accurate in its judgement that pupils' achievement is good and that standards are above average. By the time children leave Reception and enter Year 1, levels are just above those expected for their age. Good progress in Key Stage 1 results in standards rising to being above and sometimes well above average. In 2008, Year 2 pupils reached standards that were well above average in writing and mathematics.

Good progress continues through Key Stage 2 so that pupils achieve standards that are above the national average. Unvalidated data for 2008 indicate that Year 6 pupils achieved well and made good progress throughout Key Stage 2. The indication is that standards are above average and achievement is higher in English and science. The school's focus on problem solving skills in mathematics has meant that pupils' progress has improved in this subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress towards their targets set in learning. However, more able pupils do not always make enough progress in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding and make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement. This is a very happy school where pupils say they feel safe and secure because adults care for them and watch over them carefully during the day. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is first-rate. From an early age, pupils know how to eat healthily and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in fitness activities. Pupils enjoy learning about the environment and many are members of the Eco Council, Eco Club or the gardening group. They talk enthusiastically about developing the school grounds, building bird tables, composting and recycling waste material. Pupils' involvement in the school and wider community is extensive. They are very active in helping others, including regularly raising funds to support local charities and a hospice, as well as supporting a child in West Africa. Pupils benefit greatly from well established international links that the school has with a number of European schools and enjoy welcoming pupils from these school into their own. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to express their views, for example, as members of the school council, and enjoy contributing to school decisions. All these experiences, combined with above average standards, prepare pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because staff use their good subject knowledge to plan well paced lessons. In all lessons, the very good relationships staff have with their pupils ensure pupils behave extremely well and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils make good progress because the staff plan work well which is particularly important as pupils are taught in mixed age classes. However, work is not always challenging enough to extend learning, especially for the more able pupils. Pupils work well together, particularly in pairs, and independently. The work of teaching assistants is of a high quality. They are well trained and are deployed effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Marking, while up-to-date, varies in quality and does not consistently help pupils to know how to improve. Homework is used effectively to take learning beyond school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a good curriculum with outstanding features which helps them to achieve well both in their academic and personal development. It responds successfully to the challenge of mixed-age classes. This includes grouping pupils according to ability. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a wide range of extra subjects, for example, through the gardening club. The wealth of visitors and extended opportunities available to pupils significantly enhances their learning. For example, pupils enjoy learning traditional dance from India or Africa led by visiting dance groups while Year 2 pupils take part in a local gymnastics festival. Pupils throughout the school have the opportunity to learn French and the oldest pupils in school can enjoy residential visits to their link schools in Europe or areas more locally. Good provision exists for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but strategies for supporting the more able are not refined enough. The school works very successfully with many partners to

boost pupils' learning, personal development and well-being, for example in enhancing the outdoor area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and all the required procedures for safeguarding, including child protection, are in place. Staff are highly committed to the care and support of pupils' needs and strong partnerships with outside agencies ensure that these are met. A very supportive learning environment throughout the school ensures that pupils feel valued. Staff and pupils value and respect each other. Pupils express great confidence in their teachers and support staff, knowing that any problems they face will be dealt with successfully. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are in place but as yet are not rigorous enough to readily identify all pupils needing support or challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team, governors and staff work well together as a team to raise standards and set a good tone and atmosphere for learning. Leaders check provision effectively through monitoring systems and put strategies in place to improve any weakness. This is exemplified by the rapid action the school put in place in response to the dip in standards in Key Stage 2 in 2007. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their subject and carry out their role in monitoring and planning for school improvement. The school's system for checking the quality of teaching and learning is good. Governance is good. The governors are well informed about all aspects of school life and carry out their monitoring role and challenge with enthusiasm and commitment. Most parents have a positive view of the school. The school seeks the views of parents and is looking to do this more frequently to facilitate better links.

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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?	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	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	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	3
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**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aycliffe Village Primary School, Durham, DL5 6JL

I am writing to thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and have good memories of how friendly you were, not just towards me but also towards each other and your teachers. The teachers care for you well and I was impressed with the care and friendliness you show towards each other - so impressed that I thought it was good.

I looked at many parts of school life, including how teachers help you to understand about being healthy. When I asked you about this, you were so good at telling me how much you knew about the importance of healthy food, regular exercise and how to keep safe that I was amazed. It was good to see that you raise funds for charity and help in your community as well as in West Africa. I thought that the way you all work so well together and help each other develop shows your personal development is outstanding.

I enjoyed spending time in each of your classrooms, not just watching you learning inside, although that was good, but outside as well. Teachers work very hard to help you learn; in fact, I was able to say that their teaching is good. I think this is helped because they plan exciting lessons for you; this is called the curriculum and your school has a good curriculum. I have asked your school to challenge you much more, in all areas of the curriculum, so that many of you can achieve higher levels. I have also asked your school to make sure that when termly assessments are checked it looks extra carefully to make sure that you are all getting the support that you need and making the very best progress that you can.

I was pleased to tell your headteacher that your school is a good school. I know how proud the school is of all you do. Well done and I hope you all continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Yours faithfully

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector