

Cockton Hill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114111
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325948
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	174
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 Joan Imrie
Headteacher	Dr John Redman
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	McIntyre Terrace Bishop Auckland County Durham DL14 6HW
Telephone number	01388 604627
Fax number	01388 604627

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a below average sized infant school. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Few are at an early stage of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in two Reception Classes.

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. It has several outstanding features. Personal development is excellent and pupils settle quickly into this friendly, happy school. They know how important it is to remember the school motto: 'If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours.' Parents, who express strong support for the school, are delighted too. One typically wrote, 'Everything is about the children and what can be improved for them.'

Pupils understand the importance of being healthy and they love physical activities. Their enthusiastic involvement in creative projects typifies their high levels of enjoyment of school. They form good relationships and enjoy taking responsibility. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils have responded very positively to the school community by serving as councillors and by fund-raising for worthy causes. They are justifiably proud of their four 'Impetus' awards for citizenship, the most recent on rights, responsibilities, tolerance and acceptance, carried out in partnership with their Polish link school.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. From an average starting point as pupils enter Year 1 they make good progress. Standards are significantly high in speaking, listening and writing, above average in mathematics and average in reading. Progress in reading is good but not as rapid as that in other aspects of literacy. This is partly due to missed opportunities to promote reading skills through other subjects. Pupils make outstanding progress in speaking, listening and writing and this reflects an excellent curriculum of rich, inspiring learning experiences and good teaching that focuses well on key knowledge and skills delivered through engaging approaches. The curriculum is enriched through excellent global links, visits, the use of visitors and extra-curricular clubs. A weakness of teaching is that occasionally the pace of lessons slows and pupils are delayed in commencing more active learning.

The care of pupils is outstanding in this school where every child matters. Pupils feel very safe because they can turn to adults who provide excellent care and know each of them personally. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, benefit from the excellent support provided by skilled, sensitive teaching assistants. Academic guidance is good. Pupils benefit from personal spoken guidance and encouragement and are set clear targets so that they know how to improve.

Leadership, management and governance are good. Leaders provide strong, clear direction and teamwork is strong. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It has made good improvement since the previous inspection and has a good plan for its future improvement. A strength is that community cohesion is promoted very well through excellent partnerships and first-rate international links. Governors contribute well to school improvement. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are below those typically found. Many start with limited speech, language and immature personal and social skills. Progress is good in all areas of learning. Children make rapid progress in social skills and they speak and listen to adults confidently. Good teaching leads to good progress across all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, the skills and

abilities of most children are at the levels expected for their age overall although many do not reach the expected goal for communication and language.

Children's personal development is good. Most behave well, sit patiently, listen to instructions and collaborate when playing in small groups. They cooperate with each other, such as helping to put away resources during tidy up time. Progress is good because the Early Years Foundation Stage team plan a good balance of adult-led and child-selected activities. There has been good progress in increasing the opportunities available that promote independent learning. For example, without adult help two children enjoyed organising animals on a model farm; outside a small group chased a flying kite and others were productively involved in using soft play equipment.

Provision for health and well-being is excellent. All children have a 'key worker' and there is a high level of consistency in systems and routines. Leadership is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage team bring a shared approach to developing provision and have ambitious plans for enhancing outdoor learning experiences. The regular assessment practices commence with an introductory activity book for children to use at home and progress updates for parents each term.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve reading standards by ensuring pupils have opportunities to practise this skill in all subjects.
- Improve consistency of pace in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Many pupils start Year 1 with average starting points except in communication and language. An increasing number of pupils start at different times during Years 1 and 2 and these pupils' skills are often at a lower level than the pupils who have made a good start in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff in Years 1 and 2 match work to pupils' individual needs so that all make good progress. The results of teachers' assessments in 2008 show a rising trend and were average in reading, above average in mathematics and exceptionally high in writing. Current standards in Year 2 are also above average overall. They are average in reading and above in mathematics. Standards in speaking, listening and writing are significantly high. Progress is outstanding in these key skills given pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 1. This reflects school leaders' determination to provide rich, engaging curriculum experiences and solid teaching of a wide range of writing styles. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they benefit from sensitive, skilled support. These gains considerably enhance pupils' personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Multicultural awareness is exceptional; children have benefited from, and are able to make, comparisons between their lives and those experienced by children in Estonia, France, Poland and Russia. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and are unmistakably enthusiastic in lessons. Most attend regularly and attendance is broadly average.

Pupils are keen to exercise and know how to select healthy food. They feel very safe, know how to stay safe and are confident staff listen to them. This absolute trust has resulted in children gaining self-confidence, language development and decision making. Relationships are excellent because respect and enjoyment are central to the way in which the school empowers children. Pupils are proud of the way in which they take responsibility as monitors, buddies and school council members. Pupils collaborate very well in small groups. They speak with pride about raising money for good causes. Some organised stalls and sold goods they had made themselves. Pupils confidently negotiate, express opinions and make decisions. This, along with their good progress in literacy and numeracy, prepares them very well to cope with life in the junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and this promotes good progress. Staff have a good awareness of the personal needs of individual pupils. They plan successfully by skilfully matching work to meet their needs. The outcomes are good because pupils increase their factual knowledge and skills through activities that also promote self-esteem. Pupils enjoy lively practical activities. A particular strength is the outstanding teaching of writing. Stimulating teaching, utilising consistent approaches, helps pupils to learn to write in many styles including stories, poems, instructions and reports covering the exciting activities they do at school. Most lessons are lively and engaging. A weakness is that sometimes pupils spend too long listening passively. This limits time for them to follow things up for themselves. There are also missed opportunities to promote reading skills as learning develops in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is imaginative, innovative and inspiring. The key to success is the way the school uses rich and varied learning experiences to enthuse and motivate children to develop knowledge and skills simultaneously. Priority is given to developing numeracy and consolidating writing imaginatively across the curriculum. Pupils increased their mathematical and art skills in a project that included a journey on a steam train. Personal and social skills are a key feature of the curriculum, leading to excellent relationships and a caring community. Another exceptional feature is the well-established international links. First hand contact with 'friends' abroad provides pupils with an early understanding of distant place. Pupils have listened to visitors of Polish and Zimbabwe origin telling their 'family story'. Visiting authors and storytellers help pupils to quickly develop self-confidence and imagination. Practical tasks such as working on an allotment further enhance provision. Extra-curricular provision is excellent and includes gymnastics, information and communication technology (ICT), art and French.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff are trained regularly in first aid and arrangements for child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding meet requirements. An exceptional feature is the way accidents and pupil illnesses at school are dealt with. Recording incidents is exemplary. Pastoral care is outstanding. Pupils are treated as individuals and every

effort is made to develop them to their full potential. The school provides an exceptionally warm and caring environment where all children are valued. As one parent said, 'It is a fantastic place!' Attendance is monitored closely and help is given to parents finding it difficult to ensure children attend regularly.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provided through teaching and the work of teaching assistants is excellent. The school orchestrates a huge range of professionals to underpin its work and support families. It is this robust package including services provided by a transition worker, home–school liaison officer and parental support adviser. Collaboration is excellent and helps the most vulnerable children to settle quickly. Academic guidance is good. Teachers assess pupils' development regularly and track progress diligently. They speak to children about their work, set them simple, clear targets and share this information with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher, who has an exceptional vision to make these pupils citizens of the world, is supported by a dedicated staff. Important outcomes of this good leadership are that standards are rising, resources for ICT are better, the curriculum is now outstanding and the school is fully inclusive. With good improvement since the previous inspection there is good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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?	1
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	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	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?	1
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	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?	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**

26 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cockton Hill Infant School, Durham, DL14 6HW

Thank you for helping us when we inspected your school. You were friendly and helpful. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms, looking at your work on display, in your books and talking to you about your school.

You attend a good school. It has some outstanding aspects. We know you think regularly about your school motto and think of school as a happy, smiley place to be. All the people who work in school are doing a good job. Your personal development, including behaviour, is outstanding. Your attendance is satisfactory. You told us you know why it is important to be healthy and stay fit. We know you can get help quickly if you need to because you benefit from excellent care. We saw how well you help the daily running of the school through the many responsibilities you have such as working on the school council.

We know you enjoy the excellent curriculum that is provided for you. We were impressed with your progress in speaking, listening and writing. This is helping you to prepare well for the junior school. Well done! Teaching is good and helps you to make good progress in other subjects too. By Year 2 you reach above average standards. Your excellent links with the local community and 'friends' in distant places, help you to understand the similarities and differences of people from alternative backgrounds and cultures.

There are two things we have asked your school to do now.

- Improve your reading skills by making sure you practise reading when you are learning in other subjects.
- Ensure that during lessons you do not have to wait too long before you start to do things yourselves.

We wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Derek Sleightholme and Mary Stewart

Additional Inspectors