

# Deaf Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114144
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325951
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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)	139
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 Ian Harper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kieran Pavey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<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>	Trimdon Station County Durham TS29 6BP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01429 880358
<b>Fax number</b>	01429 880358

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Deaf Hill is a smaller than average school. Most pupils are from a White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is twice the average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school serves an area with significant social and economic disadvantage. The school hosts a family learning centre. The current headteacher has been in post for three terms. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made up of a Nursery and a Reception class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Deaf Hill is a good and improving school. Decisive in the school's good progress since the last inspection is the vision and quiet determination of the headteacher. He has raised expectations of what can be achieved by pupils regardless of background or starting point. Together, senior leaders and governors are committed to providing quality care and support to make certain all are included. As a consequence, the headteacher enjoys the trust and confidence of parents. A parent's comment that 'the school is now much more pupil focused' sums up the feelings of the overwhelming majority of parents.

Good, engaging teaching, together with a creative curriculum which is well matched to pupils' needs and interests, ensure that pupils achieve well. Although standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average, pupils make good progress from very often low starting points. Effective guidance and support boosts confidence, raises self-esteem and offers opportunities for all to make equally good progress. This includes those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Even so, literacy skills are not as high as they might be and not all boys do as well as they should. In the best teaching, demanding questioning challenges pupils' thinking and develops their ability to investigate, speculate and evaluate and this helps them achieve higher levels. Active approaches make learning fun. Systematic checks of pupils' progress are made to make sure all pupils do as well as they should. Now and then, the pace and challenge of learning slows slightly which allows concentration to slip. Very occasionally individuals, mostly boys, become restless which slows the pace of their progress.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because the staff make life enjoyable and learning fun. The staff work very hard to encourage all parents to appreciate the benefits of regular attendance. As a consequence, absence is being reduced. Effective care and support make a positive contribution to improved achievement and harmony amongst the pupils. The good behaviour of nearly all pupils is further proof of the pupils' desire to learn. They are given opportunities to recognise the diverse global community in which they live, for example by using Aboriginal art to inspire their own drawing and painting. Pupils recognise the benefits that a healthy diet and regular exercise can bring to their lifestyle.

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school extremely well and is well supported by senior leaders. Agencies, community groups and the local network of schools make a significant contribution to the improvement because of the excellent quality of partnership work that is in place. Governors play an active part, ably supporting the headteacher. Self-evaluation is accurate and identifies relevant priorities for improvement, for example recognising that pupils respect for difference needs to be strengthened. Overall, good progress has been made since the last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children arrive in the Nursery with very low skills compared with those expected for their age. Communication skills are very weak. The relaxed, friendly though lively and stimulating atmosphere makes certain all children get off to a speedy start. Staff are vigilant to ensure that all needs are catered for as children settle into routines. Learning is active and thought provoking. Confidence is quickly built with highly effective personal development. Good and sometimes inspiring teaching coupled with effective support makes sure all children achieve

well, regardless of background or starting point. Staff have high expectations of what children can do and achieve. By the time they reach the end of Reception, skills are greatly improved, although still well below that expected for their age. Imaginative use is made of indoor space to ensure effective learning. For example, a converted store cupboard is now a mini theatre with a corridor auditorium. Thoughtfully planned activities capture the interest and imagination to explore, discover, share and make choices. The strong emphasis on personal development builds confidence and encourages independent learning from an early age. Despite the shortcomings in the quality of the outdoor facilities, children gain much from the freedom to investigate, be creative and constructive. There is a relentless focus on speaking and listening to broaden their thinking, knowledge and understanding, for example counting out the number of candles on a playdough birthday cake or providing the commentary to an assessment video. They are taught about Buddha which introduces the children to other cultures. Regular observations, including the creative use of media, ensure that the staff are fully aware of each child's learning steps. High quality welfare is successfully promoted to ensure all feel safe and secure. The provision is really well led and managed with a passionate commitment to further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve literacy skills, especially for those boys who could be doing better.
- Ensure that all pupils have a better understanding of the diverse community in the United Kingdom.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well from very low start points because the teaching is consistently good and support effective. Boys' communication skills, especially their writing, are particularly weak. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar good progress to their peers, because they receive very good support. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards with science standards higher than English and mathematics. However, cohorts do vary considerably from year-to-year. In 2008 tests, because a much larger number of pupils, mainly boys, entered school with exceptionally low skills, results revealed below average standards though progress remained good. Strenuous efforts have been made to raise achievement and standards, in particular for boys, and this is paying off well in Years 1 to 6. Current school information demonstrates that a large majority of pupils are on course to exceed their challenging targets, with more pupils on target to reach higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6. Nevertheless, despite improvements, boys' literacy skills remain a weakness, especially their reading and writing.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, are good. Despite the excellent work in partnership with welfare staff, the attendance of a few pupils is not as high as it might be and it is satisfactory overall. Behaviour is good and often very good. Most older pupils set a really good example to younger children by their safe and considerate attitudes. Any inappropriate behaviour is very adeptly managed by staff, made easier by the strong family ethos in the school. School council members speak with enthusiasm and pride about their contribution to decision making. Pupils are active in the local community,

joining in festivals and fundraising events. They have a developing grasp of the multicultural world in which they live although first-hand experiences of other cultures in diverse Britain are limited. A residential experience for older pupils provides opportunities for additional responsibility and a chance to show initiative. Improving basic skills, growing confidence and self-belief prepare them well for the next stage in their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good and often imaginative teaching provides a variety of opportunities for all pupils to achieve well. Staff work tirelessly to remove any obstacles that stand in the way of their learning. They expect all pupils to do well. Corridors and classrooms are vibrant and interesting areas to learn. No opportunity is missed to celebrate and display pupils' work. Lessons are challenging and as a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Thought provoking questions are used to develop thinking and increase knowledge. A strong emphasis is placed on working together and sharing ideas. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and well organised. Their quality is boosted by the successful use of interactive technology. Those pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties are skilfully managed by a talented team of teaching assistants. Occasionally, lesson pace slips a little which allows one or two pupils to become restless and opportunities are not taken to broaden their thinking and practice their skills.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A wide range of extra activities, visits and visitors enrich the good and strengthening curriculum. Pupils' experience is increased by a variety of visits and visitors, for example visiting musicians from the Sage Music Centre culminating in a live performance at the centre. The curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet all needs, especially those of boys to capture and hold interest and boost basic skills. It encourages the appreciation of their own culture, for example making a short animated recording of the Trimdon Grange pit disaster and its impact on the local community. However, first-hand experiences of other religions and beliefs are restricted. Lessons are well adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example providing exciting, lively themes to reading and writing. After-school clubs are well attended and much appreciated by pupils and parents. There is really good provision for personal and emotional development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good quality of care for the well-being of every pupil is apparent in all aspects of school life. Parents express much confidence and trust in the headteacher and staff to provide good quality care for children. Current safeguarding requirements are met. Staff give protection and health and safety a high priority. Vulnerable pupils and those lacking confidence are given the support they need to succeed. Pupils who need additional or specialist support are quickly identified. Excellent partnership arrangements enable staff to call upon specialist support if needed. For example, the successful 'Every Child, a Talker' initiative for younger children makes effective use of a speech therapist when a difficulty is detected. No stone is left unturned by staff to enable all to achieve. The concerted efforts to raise achievement have boosted

aspirations of both pupils and families. The next steps in their learning are clearly explained and pupils are developing the skills and confidence to check for themselves how successful they are.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has successfully fostered commitment and teamwork from a talented group of staff. Together, all are clear about the ambitions and direction of the school. Settled staffing and increased confidence enables staff to help and support each other really well. Middle management is strengthened because there is an unmistakable focus on raising achievement. Challenging targets are set for all pupils although the outcomes for a small number of boys could be better. As a result, the school offers good value for money. The headteacher has accurately identified strengths and areas for improvement although judgements are sometimes cautious. There is a close bond between the school and its surrounding community. As a result, cohesion is being strengthened although more needs to be done to prepare pupils for life in a diverse community. Governance is good and governors challenge and hold the school to account in equal measure. All together this gives the school a very good capacity to sustain 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?	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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Deaf Hill Primary School, Durham, TS29 6BP

I thoroughly enjoyed my inspection of your school and appreciated your friendly, cheerful welcome. I was impressed by the calm, happy family atmosphere and your keenness to do as well as you can. I enjoyed talking to the school council and seeing how much you enjoy your lessons and playtimes with your friends. You go to a good school and improving school. These are some of the things the school does well.

- You are taught well and receive good care, support and guidance.
- You make good progress and achieve well.
- Your behaviour is good and sometimes very good. I was really impressed with your considerate attitudes towards one another and the way you helped younger children.
- You thoroughly enjoy the many interesting activities and extra clubs arranged for you.
- Your school's leaders are determined to continue to improve your school, so that all of you can achieve well as you can.
- You are well looked after and your headteacher and staff work very hard to make certain that no one is left out.
- Your parents are very pleased with your progress in school.

We have asked your school to improve your education by making sure that you all develop your literacy skills and that boys reading and writing is improved. I have also asked the school to add to your experiences of other beliefs and religions that are seen across Britain.

You all have an important part to play helping to improve your school. You can play your part by attending regularly, listening very carefully to the advice and guidance of your staff and by working as hard as you possibly can. This will help you continue to achieve well and reach even higher standards.

Thank you for helping me with this inspection. I hope the school will keep on building on its strengths.

Best of luck to you all!

Yours faithfully

Clive Petts

Lead inspector