

Byerley Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114189
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325962
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joseph Clark

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)	229
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	Mr Ian Banks
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Gargan
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greenfield Way Newton Aycliffe County Durham DL5 7LE
Telephone number	01325 300598
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. Pupils come from areas of above average social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average, as is that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides for children at the Early Years Foundation Stage in 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: 3

This is a satisfactory school although there are some good elements and in the pupils' personal development, some outstanding features. The school's effectiveness in the past 18 months or so has been adversely affected by staffing turbulence and absence, some at senior level. Happily, staffing is now much more stable and there are signs of improvement in key areas such as teaching and learning and in pupils' progress. However, the rate of progress needs to quicken if the school is to become more effective quickly.

The school looks after its pupils well. 'The school is very attentive to the children's needs' and 'My child is very happy and feels safe in school' were typical of many parental comments. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Pupils mix easily and confidently together and say they really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their outstanding attendance. They have excellent attitudes to learning and love taking on responsibility to help in the smooth running of the school. Pupils say they feel safe in school where relationships between each other and with adults are excellent. They know about the importance of healthy lifestyles and adopting safe practices.

Pupils currently in Years 1 to 6 started in Year 1 with above average standards. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average overall but are weaker in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils. Given the above average starting points to Year 1, pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory except for more able pupils who are not challenged enough. This group of pupils underachieve because teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, and with some strengths, does not focus enough on their particular needs. Similarly, the curriculum, while satisfactory, is not adapted well enough to extend the more able pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. After some recent disruption, the school's leadership team is now settled and is beginning to establish more effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Better tracking systems are being used to monitor pupils' progress more accurately. The effectiveness of subject leadership is, however, variable in quality and does not contribute as well as it could to school improvement. Governance is satisfactory. The vast majority of parents have confidence in the school and appreciate the approachability of staff. As one parent put it, 'The staff are helpful and friendly, and encourage a family feel to the school'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision for children's learning and development is satisfactory. Children currently enter the Reception class with skills broadly typical for their age, unlike in previous years when their skills were very highly developed. A range of enjoyable activities, both indoor and increasingly outdoor, support their development. At times, however, the lack of a clear learning focus in an activity inhibits children's progress. A clearly planned approach to the teaching of reading ensures children make good progress in this area. Opportunities for writing independently are limited. The teaching assistant works effectively with small groups, although her skills are sometimes underused in whole-class sessions. Children's personal development is satisfactory. They are extensively supported by the adults in the classroom; this enables them to succeed

in given tasks, but reduces their ability to become independent learners. The recently developed outdoor learning area is too restricted for children to freely access bikes and scooters to support their physical development. By the time children move into Year 1, standards have dipped from the above average levels seen in the past. They are now average. Leadership is satisfactory. All staff work very hard to provide a safe and welcoming environment for the children, and the activities are well organised and managed. There is not a consistently planned programme of assessment based on children's independent activities which clearly inform planning and ensure an appropriate challenge, especially for the more able children. There is sometimes a lack of consistency in provision because there are not enough organised opportunities for all Early Years Foundation Stage staff to work together on planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment and planning in the Reception class so that all children become better independent learners.
- Improve the challenge in lessons and strengthen the curriculum to raise the achievement of more able pupils.
- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Develop the role of the subject leaders so that they make a more significant contribution to school improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 started in Year 1 with standards that were above average or better. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were well above average overall, as they had been in previous years. Given their starting points, pupils' achievement overall was satisfactory but higher attaining pupils failed to attain the higher L3+ grades in writing they were capable of. Provisional test results at the end of Year 6 in 2008 indicate that standards were above national expectations and achievement for most pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, was satisfactory. The more able pupils did not attain the higher Level 5 grades of which they were capable and underachieved. Standards in writing fell markedly from previous years. The school failed to meet its statutory targets. Pupils are currently making satisfactory but accelerating progress. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them in national tests due to take place in summer 2009.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Cultural development is good. Extended trips to France and themed African weeks extend pupils' awareness of other cultures. Knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain is satisfactory. Relationships throughout the school are strong and support learning well. Residential visits in Years 4 and 6 help develop tolerance and understanding of others. Behaviour is excellent and exclusions practically unheard of. Pupils

mix easily and confidently together. They say there is no bullying but they know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Initiatives such as the 'Byerley Buddies' provide reassurance for others. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility and exercise leadership skills, for example as house captains, school councillors or librarians. Attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy coming to school but would like more activities arranged for them after school, including access to computers. They enjoy most of their lessons, especially practical lessons, for example, in Year 6 science. Attendance is outstanding. Links with the local community, for example through displays of pupils' work in the area, are good. The school has a Healthy School award and Activemark award and pupils talk knowledgeably about the need for healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They know how to keep safe. They leave school with above average basic skills and this, along with their excellent social skills, provides a good preparation for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but improving. There is some good teaching, mostly in Key Stage 2, but not enough of it is aimed at ensuring that higher attaining pupils achieve their full potential. Where teaching is good, lessons are well planned, taking good account of pupils' prior attainment and providing good levels of challenge for the different groups of ability in the class. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and work effectively with small groups or individuals, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In Key Stage 1, not enough use is made of the teaching assistants' expertise in lessons during whole-class sessions. Marking sometimes sets useful targets which help pupils make the next steps in learning but this is not consistent in all classes. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good, there is insufficient focus on planning how pupils will achieve and make progress. Across the school, good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Although it meets the needs of most groups of learners, it does not meet the aspirations and capabilities of more able pupils. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some activities, such as themed weeks and residential visits to outdoor field study centres and to France, enrich and enliven the curriculum but are not yet clearly linked to support identified areas for school development. The range of after-school activities to extend pupils' learning and development is limited. The curriculum effectively supports pupils' personal development, particularly through religious education and personal, social, and health education lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good pastoral support. Relationships throughout the school are very supportive and encouraging. Pupils are happy in school and feel they are well cared for and supported. Strong links with external agencies such as the school nurse and the local authority's learning support services provide good support. Effective strategies are in place to promote pupils'

health and safety and safeguarding systems meet current requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groups receive good personal support. Good links exist with local high schools, for example the Tea-Time club, which help ease the transition to secondary school. Pupils receive satisfactory guidance on how to improve their work. Target setting is used effectively in some classes and subjects, but its use is inconsistent. It does not always help pupils to know their next steps in learning or challenge the more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The recent disruption in staffing has led to a period of stagnation which has prevented the school making enough improvement since the previous inspection. However, this is now largely resolved and the school is settling down. The headteacher is effectively bringing about the changes needed to ensure the school's effectiveness improves, but the pace of change needs to accelerate. New tracking systems, including regular pupil progress reviews, are helping track pupils' progress more accurately and hold teachers to account for pupil progress. Assessment at the end of Year 2 is now more secure. Subject leadership, some of which is new, is developing good monitoring systems to inform judgements on how well pupils are progressing. However, as yet these have not all had sufficient impact on raising pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Self-evaluation systems are in place but the outcomes tend to be over-generous in evaluating how well the school is performing. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its leadership and management. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory giving due regard to broadening the pupils' understanding of the local and global community and providing a harmonious environment within school. After a period when the school stood still, it is now improving and given the current circumstances, it has a satisfactory capacity to improve in future.

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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	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	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

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Byerley Park Primary School, Durham, DL5 7LE

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspection team into your school and sharing your work. We enjoyed talking to you, especially out on the yard in the lovely warm sun! We would like to tell you what we found on our visit. Overall, yours is a satisfactory school but one which does some things really well.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- Everyone in the school gets on very well together.
- You really enjoy school and your attendance is outstanding.
- Your behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school are excellent – you are a credit to your parents and teachers.
- The school looks after you very well.

These are the four things we think the school can work on to make improvements.

- Help the children in the Reception class to become more independent by not relying on adults so much.
- Help you all to achieve higher standards in writing.
- Make sure those of you with high ability achieve the very best you can.
- Ensure that the teachers who have responsibility for different subjects become even more effective in improving standards in their subjects.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard, particularly in improving your writing skills.

Thank you once again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Joe Clark

Lead inspector