

## Bowes Hutchinson's C of E (Aided) School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114237
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325972
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	58
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	10
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Bettison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Griffiths
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 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>	Bowes Barnard Castle County Durham DL12 9LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01833 628291
<b>Fax number</b>	01833 628487

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors gathered evidence from analysing the views of parents as expressed in their questionnaires, from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, evaluating assessment information, scrutinising documents and conducting interviews and discussions with the pupils and staff. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of strategies used to improve writing
- the effectiveness of strategies used to ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress as well as other pupils
- the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the communication, language, personal and social skills of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that most of the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school traditionally serving a small rural village and isolated farms. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and none are at an early stage of acquiring English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Many parents have chosen to send their children to Bowes and almost half of the pupils come from beyond the immediate locality. The school has gained an excellent reputation for its provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the number in this grouping is well above average. Pupils are educated in three classes, all with mixed ages. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in the same class as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. 'Our children love going to school, they work hard, make excellent progress and have fun', is a typical comment that reflects parents' unanimous support for the school. The headteacher, who provides inspirational leadership and outstanding direction, is supported by a small but very enthusiastic staff. Teamwork is exceptional and high quality provision identified at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. The school clearly meets its declared aim to 'develop everyone's talents in a totally caring environment' because pupils make excellent progress both academically and personally.

Achievement is outstanding throughout the school and all pupils achieve equally well. Many pupils have joined the school during their primary years and have only had the benefit of its excellent provision for a limited time. Small cohorts, recently as low as three pupils, lead to some variation in test results. Current standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 and above average in English, mathematics and science at Year 6. The 2008 Year 6 provisional results support the inspection findings of pupils gaining above average standards in all subjects. These results represent outstanding progress because all pupils were identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Excellent progress occurs because of the high quality of support they receive from talented teachers supported by very skilled teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils welcome visitors, are proud of their school and hold mature conversations. They value exercise and understand the importance of a balanced diet. Their enthusiasm for energetic exercise and eagerness to take part in physical activities have helped the school secure accreditation as a Healthy School and gain the Activemark. Pupils reflect deeply on school and wider issues. The school works closely with the village community. It holds services in the church to mark different parts of the Christian calendar to which all members of the local community are invited. An exceptional feature is that school councillors, charged with responsibility to identify pupils whose conduct and progress merits recognition in achievement assemblies, assume this important responsibility conscientiously. They justify clearly why the acknowledgment is deserved. Pupils feel very safe and settled because the school provides them with excellent care, support and guidance. Their behaviour is exemplary and their attendance is above average. Through business enterprise activities such as fund raising for worthy causes and taking notes of council meetings pupils are preparing very well to cope with life ahead.

Teaching and learning are outstanding because it is embedded in a profound understanding of how children learn. Teaching inspires pupils to gain knowledge and skills. Expectations are high, relationships are brilliant and assessments diligently undertaken. Planning reflects the priority to promote key skills. In doing so it skilfully develops these through very effective topic work and by matching activities and resources to the needs of individual pupils. The use of strategies to improve writing are proving to be beneficial. This is due to an emphasis on providing interesting experiences to stimulate writing and regular practice of technical writing skills. The curriculum is outstanding. It is enhanced through visits, visitors and an appealing range of popular after school clubs. The excellent partnerships have contributed to the outstanding outdoor learning facilities such as the 'Gruffalo Trail' and award winning 'Secret Garden'. It is not surprising pupils say they love school lessons and activities. School leaders recognise their responsibilities in making sure that the school plays its part in contributing to pupils'

understanding of the local community and global dimensions. This is particularly important given the relatively isolated location of the school. Well developed strategies are established to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. International links are successfully made through a national project that links pupils with schools in Europe and Tanzania.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Safeguarding meets requirements. Pupils are at the heart of this inclusive, caring family school. Personalised support ensures more able pupils are challenged, whereas support for lower ability pupils is skilfully matched to their specific needs. Some pupils use equipment specifically sourced to match their needs. Pupils know how well they are doing because of clear feedback on their targets and the actions needed to improve.

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The school has excellent monitoring systems to judge its own effectiveness and its self-evaluation gives an accurate picture of its strengths and areas to improve further. Leaders set challenging targets and are ambitious for further success. The school has improved since its last inspection and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision is outstanding. Children begin in Reception from starting points that are regularly low compared to what is typical for their age. Numbers fluctuate, and this leads to some variation in starting points. Many children are admitted with limited speech, language, personal and social skills. The EYFS and pre-school staff are jointly prioritising these areas of learning and actions taken are proving to be very effective. Staff value each child as a unique individual and set clear targets to ensure each achieves as well as they can. The outstanding teaching leads to rapid achievement across all areas of learning. Although tracking data confirms some children reach the expected goals at the end of Reception, most are below average at the start of Year 1. Planning strikes a very effective balance between adult-led and child-selected activities. Consequently children develop independence in a very well structured learning environment. More able children are challenged; those with specific individual needs are very well supported. Children thrive because activities are appealing. They thoroughly enjoy opportunities to explore and use their imagination both indoors and outdoors. A visit to the castle went off smoothly because the EYFS team have well established systems for children's care and welfare. Relationships are excellent as are children's behaviour and attitudes. Children are already developing an understanding of health knowing that 'too much chocolate makes you fat!' Leadership is excellent. The reflective EYFS team are constantly striving to improve provision further. Particular strengths include the high quality assessment practices and very good communication with parents and carers.

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

There are no areas for improvement other than those already identified in the school's own development plan.

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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?	1
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	1

### 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?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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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>	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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bowes Hutchinson's C of E (Aided) School, Durham,

DL12 9LG

We inspect many primary schools and yours is one of the best we have visited. You attend an outstanding school. Thank you for helping us. We enjoyed meeting you, visiting your classrooms, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. You were friendly and courteous and we were impressed by your excellent behaviour and good attendance.

These are the things we found out about your school during our visit. All the people who work in school are doing a good job and it is a happy smiley place to be. Your parents and carers told us how much they value the excellent care, individual support and guidance you receive. Your personal development is excellent. You told us you know it is important to be fit and healthy. You told us you feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy the excellent range of activities you take part in. Your school leaders have devised a teaching and learning programme for you to follow that makes learning interesting and challenging for you. We saw your impressive outdoor facilities such as the 'Gruffalo Walk' and 'Secret Garden' that provide you with rich learning experiences. We saw the Reception children being encouraged to develop speaking, listening and writing skills and how you are learning quickly to play together. We know from lessons and your books how much your writing has improved through the new methods your teachers are using.

You are set challenging targets because the staff know you can achieve very well and make rapid progress. You play your part by continuing to work hard in lessons. Consequently you all make outstanding progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 you are working at the expected level and by Year 6 you reach standards that are above average. Well done!

Your challenge is to work with your teachers and their assistants to make the school even better in future!

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

Yours sincerely

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector