

Bedlington Stead Lane First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122181
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327649
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	170
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 S Greaves
Headteacher	Mr J A Jones
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stead Lane The Oval Bedlington Northumberland NE22 5JS
Telephone number	01670 823171
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bedlington Stead Lane First School is a smaller than average school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. The percentage of all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Attendance is slightly below average. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bedlington Stead Lane First School is a good school. It is at the heart of the community. It provides its pupils with good care and support and ensures that they are happy, behave well and show enthusiasm for their lessons. Academic guidance is good and has encouraged pupils to know that they can improve the quality of their work. Clear target-setting is increasingly effective in enabling pupils to make good and improving progress. Parents strongly appreciate the way teachers help their children to feel safe and secure in school and make lessons interesting.

Effective action has been taken to improve the quality of the curriculum, which is good and makes a major contribution to promoting pupils' progress. Pupils are engaged in a range of interesting activities which are beginning to help them improve their writing skills but there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. A developing strength of learning is the way pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively. Teachers make learning exciting and support pupils well, although occasionally they do not check sufficiently that pupils have understood what they are learning. Children enter school with skills which are below national expectations and well below in the key area of communication language and literacy. Results of the 2008 assessments for Year 2 and the optional tests for Year 4 indicate that pupils' achievement is good across school. Last year, the oldest pupils left with standards which were broadly average in reading and mathematics though slightly below in writing.

Good relationships and sensitive support from a caring staff promote good levels of personal development. Pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Attendance is below average because some of the youngest children do not attend regularly enough. Pupils' behaviour is good and contributes to their enjoyment of school. A small minority of boys can become distracted when work is not engaging enough. Pupils readily take on responsibilities, such as being school council members or playground helpers. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit, as the school strongly promotes these aspects. The school's strong focus on developing pupils' academic and personal development, including an impressive focus on business enterprise, gives them a good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are good. The vigorous leadership of the new headteacher has empowered management at all levels and together they have introduced a range of appropriate initiatives to raise pupils' attainment. They have motivated staff to make lessons exciting and relevant and encouraged pupils to behave well and to work hard to improve their work. These initiatives now need time to become embedded so they can have a significant impact on raising standards. There is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The highly effective action already taken, shows that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills which are low compared with those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They settle very quickly, enjoy school and form good relationships with adults and other children. Children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the way teachers and teaching assistants effectively manage the provision. They make good use of the indoor and outdoor

facilities, and foster children's development in all areas of learning. Children follow classroom routines well and thoroughly enjoy taking a full part in activities. They work well independently but limited communication skills sometimes interfere with their interaction with others. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), most pupils have met expected goals except in communication, language and literacy and to a lesser extent in mathematical development. Children are well cared for and good systems are in place to ensure they are safe and secure. They understand how to keep themselves safe and are encouraged to adopt healthy eating habits. Children develop a good understanding of the wider world through creative use of play and are actively encouraged to solve problems and use information communication technology well. The EYFS is well led and managed. Following a review of assessment information, assessments are being more accurately recorded to reflect children's progress and the outdoor provision is developing well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers check that all pupils have a clear understanding of what they are learning.
- Embed recent initiatives so that they can impact further on standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and achievement is good. From a below average starting point in the Nursery they make up ground, though remain slightly below expectations in communication, language and literacy and to a lesser extent in mathematical development. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have made up further ground and in 2007, standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress in the early stages of Key Stage 2, although writing is a weaker aspect. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally as good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and develop a good understanding of how to keep safe in a wide range of situations. They understand important aspects of maintaining healthy lifestyles, taking keen advantage of opportunities to exercise and eat healthily. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but their cultural development is satisfactory because although they understand the basics of other cultures their experience of the multi-cultural nature of the wider community is limited. Behaviour is good overall; although a small minority are sometimes unsettled in lessons. Attendance is satisfactory, with a few younger pupils not always attending as well as they could. Pupils make good contributions to their community and school life, for example, by developing the garden and successfully promoting good behaviour as playground buddies. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through developing a good awareness of enterprise and business.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned to include a range of interesting learning activities and to meet the needs of individual pupils. Pupils are encouraged to become independent learners and to work collaboratively with others. Especially effective is the use of 'talk partners' to share ideas. Relationships in class are good and teachers successfully encourage pupils to work enthusiastically and behave well. Occasionally, there can be some distraction, especially amongst the boys, when the work is less engaging but any misbehaviour is well managed. Most teachers tell pupils clearly what they are expected to learn in each lesson and work alongside them to support them in their learning. However, in a few lessons, teachers miss opportunities to check that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Marking is increasingly well used to tell pupils how to improve their work, although this is inconsistent across school. Teachers are ably assisted by classroom assistants whom they deploy very effectively to work with particular pupils and groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with a necessary focus on literacy and numeracy and well directed personalised support where necessary. Pupils are encouraged to see the links between learning in different subjects and this is beginning to have an impact on their writing. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. Strong provision for physical education and an increasing focus on creative subjects enhances the pupils' enjoyment of school. The many activities and visits enjoyed by the pupils motivate them to improve their writing and to develop their understanding of their own and other cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of their local area but opportunities to understand the multicultural nature of the wider community are less well developed. Enterprise activities are particularly effective and pupils have worked alongside local businesses to create a sensory garden. Recent initiatives have improved the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), although its use is not yet embedded across the curriculum. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which many pupils enjoy. Pupils speak with enthusiasm of the field trips they make and the wide variety of sports and other activities available to them such as gardening and cookery clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. There are strong relationships with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of all pupils are addressed. A very large majority of parents are supportive of the school and what it does for their children. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for vulnerable and looked-after children is good so that needs are quickly identified and addressed and the impact of intervention measured. The safety of pupils is paramount and all safeguarding measures are in place. A good programme of personal social and health education, which incorporates the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), contributes to pupils' good personal development. Transition between phases of education within the school prepares children well for the next phase of their education and there are developing academic and social links with the local middle school. The school has set challenging

targets and is effectively tracking pupils' academic progress. While this has had an impact on planning, it has not yet had sufficient time to impact on pupils' progress in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school. Through effective distributive leadership he has given existing staff a clear picture of their roles and responsibilities and with effective team work has introduced a range of initiatives. The senior leadership team has become more accountable and is monitoring and evaluating the developing impact of its hard work. The new strategies have been appropriate to the school's development and are clearly focused on raising standards. However, they now need time to become embedded so that they can impact fully on pupils' attainment. Governors have supported the school well and are developing an increasingly challenging view of school improvement. Resources have been well targeted to improve the school environment for the benefit of the pupils. Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection especially in the development of the curriculum. In the light of the school's effective self-evaluation and the appropriateness of recent initiatives it has a good capacity to improve.

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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?	2
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?	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	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

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	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

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	2
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**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bedlington Stead Lane First School, Northumberland,
NE22 5JS

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school. Bedlington Stead Lane First School is a good school. The staff care for you very well and help you to learn because they want to make your lessons fun and exciting.

We were pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. You come to school on time and all of you behave well in the playground. We think that your behaviour is good, although some of you do not always settle to your work in class. We found that you are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you enjoyed school and that you liked your teachers. You said you appreciated the activities the school provides for you like the visits to museums and sporting activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning.

We talked to your headteacher and staff about what could be done to make your school even better; this is what we came up with:

- make sure that you always understand the work you are being asked to do;
- make sure that staff persevere with the many new ideas that have been introduced recently.

You can help by always doing your best. Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector