

Windy Nook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108374
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	331427
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Neil HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	361
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	Cllr Jim Turnbull
Headteacher	Mrs Alwyn Bathan
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Albion Street Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE10 9BD
Telephone number	0191 4694954
Fax number	0191 4694954

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Inspection number	331427

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Windy Nook Primary is a large school in the Windy Nook and Whitehills ward of Gateshead. A nursery unit and two Reception classes make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

The attainment of pupils when they start school in the Nursery and in Reception is broadly typical for children of that age.

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. The overwhelming majority of parents are happy to send their children there. They are particularly pleased at the high level of support the staff provide, the quality of the teaching, and the progress pupils make. Their views are epitomised in one parent's comment: 'The school endeavours to treat each child as an individual, enabling them to reach their potential academically and socially.'

The school has made good progress since the last inspection by improving teaching and the curriculum, but it has not succeeded in improving pupils' achievement in mathematics. Standards overall are broadly average and this constitutes satisfactory achievement. Pupils make good progress in most lessons, especially in English. In mathematics, there are signs that the school's efforts are beginning to make a difference, but not early enough to affect national test results, nor fast enough for many pupils currently at the school to achieve the standards they are capable of.

Pupils' personal development and well-being have many strengths. In particular, the pupils behave extremely well, have a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles, and feel very safe in school. A further example of how the school has moved on since the last inspection is the improvement in pupils' attendance. The high level of pupil and parental satisfaction with the school and the many successes pupils enjoy are due to the innovative curriculum, the quality of the teaching, and the level of individual care the staff provide.

The improvements have been achieved because the school identifies its strengths and weaknesses accurately and, for the most part, knows how to tackle its main priorities. Its energetic pursuit of higher standards in mathematics has not been successful for a number of reasons. Two key causes are the failure to use assessment information to raise standards in the subject, and managers' tendency not to consider pupils' learning when evaluating the school's effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are broadly similar to those commonly seen in children of their age. They make good progress in most areas of learning so that, by the end of the Reception Year, their attainment is slightly above average. Writing is particularly good, as is their personal and social development. Boys' creative development is lower than average and staff are taking steps to improve this area. Teaching and learning are generally good and children's welfare and personal development are promoted well. In particular, the children develop good attitudes to learning that help them maintain concentration, although sometimes they are required to listen to the teacher for too long, especially at the start of the day. Nonetheless, for most of the session they enjoy a good range of activities, many of which enable them to work and play independently of staff, and through which their social skills develop very well. This can be illustrated by an incident when a small boy accidentally spilled some glue and spontaneously apologised to the other children at his table. The children are happy and secure and have very good relations with adults so their behaviour is very good. The staff monitor the children at work and play in order to compile a useful record of their learning and development. Parents are very happy with the guidance they receive and appreciate what is provided for their children. One parent, representative of many, commented, 'I can already

see a change in her as she has become more confident and independent.’ Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff use self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development. The ample outside areas have considerable potential for learning, but too little use is made of them to create opportunities for exploration and investigation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school.
- Evaluate its policies and initiatives in terms of their impact on pupils’ learning.
- Improve the opportunities for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils’ standards are broadly average at the end of both key stages. Given their starting points this represents satisfactory achievement.

In recent years, standards have risen in English and science, and achievement for many pupils has been good. Last year, for example, above average numbers of pupils secured the highest level in English at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in mathematics, however, have remained stubbornly at or below average over the same period. The school has taken steps to improve achievement in mathematics, and these are beginning to bear fruit, but they have not yet had any impact on the national tests. The school’s data for mathematics indicate that the current Year 2 is achieving well and also that standards are set to rise slightly at the end of Key Stage 2. There have, too, been some individual success stories in the subject, particularly where pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those with high ability have received additional support; some pupils in Year 3, for example, have made steady progress with their skills in addition.

Pupils make good progress in most lessons, particularly in English and in their creative skills. However, their progress in mathematics is patchy and standards remain too low. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Their progress last year disappointed the school, and several of them were not entered for the national test in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils’ personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Most pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in their outstanding behaviour, their positive attitude to learning and their good attendance. They feel school is, in their own words, ‘like a family’. They greatly value opportunities to express their views and take responsibility, for example, as ‘buddies’, who help organise games for younger children at playtime and offer moral support to anyone who is unhappy. Pupils understand very well what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and show commitment to healthy eating and to regular exercise. A high number of pupils undertake voluntary physical activity, for example, by cycling or walking to school. Pupils are very aware of how to stay safe. They know what to do if they come across bullying and believe the systems for them to share concerns with staff work well. Their shared sense of community is demonstrated through their involvement in fundraising and local community projects. The school’s enterprise week offers good opportunities for them to develop workplace skills that support their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are usually good and at times outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons well. In most classes, they make it clear what the pupils are to learn; structure the work so pupils make good progress throughout the lesson; and organise activities efficiently so that no time is lost. Relationships are very good. Pupils concentrate on their work and behave well. Activities are varied and practical, particularly those based on real-life situations. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the pupils used a television guide to calculate the time between programmes; and in a French lesson they wrote and filmed a weather report after watching a video of a weather forecast. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used imaginatively to make the learning stimulating and enjoyable. When the pupils are given work to complete on their own or in collaboration with others they do this very sensibly and develop their understanding well. In the best lessons, the teachers use technical vocabulary accurately and insistently, and constantly monitor the whole class to check how much they have understood. Progress in mathematics is variable; it is not good enough in those lessons where the teacher's explanations take too long or are unclear, or when the work is not sufficiently challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has many strengths, recognised in the various awards it has won, such as the Artsmark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Perhaps its most distinguishing feature is the regular use of 'themed weeks', when the normal timetable is suspended so staff can enhance pupils' learning in a variety of exciting and original ways. Activities on these very popular occasions include those designed to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity, their talents in the performing arts, and their financial skills. In addition to these events, the curriculum is often enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors. A good range of after-school clubs is popular with pupils. ICT makes a good contribution to learning in many subjects of the curriculum. A further strength is the use of additional staff to give some of the most able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities appropriate support to help meet their needs. The school has developed its curriculum since the last inspection to give pupils more opportunities to use and apply mathematics in real-life situations but has not planned opportunities for them to reinforce their mathematical skills by using them in different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's very good care and support make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents enjoy a constructive relationship with the staff and many emphasise how well their children are cared for. A comment from one parent summed up the experience of several others, 'My son was very shy and had no confidence; since joining the school his confidence has soared.' Support for pupils when they start school is good and enables them to settle quickly and happily. Vulnerable pupils are well looked after and the school works closely with a range of external agencies to support them and their families. Risk assessments and procedures for safeguarding children are robust. Pupils feel safe. The school has good systems to reinforce and reward good behaviour. Staff respond to pupils' problems quickly; pupils who have been bullied, for example, are satisfied that their teachers deal effectively with

the issue. The school's assiduous efforts to improve attendance and punctuality have been very successful. Academic guidance is variable. In English, teachers provide helpful advice and clear targets so pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to improve. The school has not yet extended this good practice to mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has improved in many respects since the last inspection. Its emphasis on developing pupils' skills in working independently has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The curriculum now has a stronger emphasis on developing pupils' creativity. Attendance has risen. Pupils' achievement in mathematics, however, has been poor and, though improving, standards are not rising fast enough. The school's slow progress on this issue has not been for the want of trying: a wide range of approaches has been used to tackle it. However, staffing disruption has interrupted the progress of some pupils. The school's system for setting targets and monitoring progress has not been used to raise standards in mathematics. Teaching in the subject is not strong enough to secure good progress in all classes.

The school evaluates itself constantly and comprehensively. Senior leaders regularly observe teaching and provide perceptive comments about strengths and areas for improvement. They accurately identify the school's shortcomings and prepare comprehensive plans for improvement. The school's self-evaluation does not consider the effect of its policies and initiatives on pupils' learning; for example, the frequent 'themed weeks' are evaluated in terms of pupils' enjoyment but not in terms of the progress pupils make. The school improvement plan establishes clear criteria by which its effectiveness can be evaluated, but these rarely include its impact on pupils' achievement.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is largely focused on engaging with the local community. It has also achieved some success in building pupils' knowledge of different faith and ethnic groups, for example through its 'diversity week'. This area of its work is not yet embedded in the curriculum and its impact on pupils' attitudes has not been evaluated.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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	3
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	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**

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windy Nook Primary School, Gateshead, NE10 9BD

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleagues so warmly into your school. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and at play; talking about your school with you and your teachers; and looking at your work. Now I want to share with you what we found.

- Windy Nook is a good school.
- You told us you enjoy school and feel safe there.
- You like your lessons and the staff. In particular you like creative and sporting activities.
- You appreciate the opportunities the staff provide for you to do exciting things. The 'themed weeks' are a particular favourite. Like you, we enjoyed being in the school during its performing arts week. You also enjoy the visits to different places in the region.
- You are growing up to be very confident, friendly and happy young people.
- You know how important it is to eat healthily and take exercise. I was pleased to hear that many of you walk or cycle to school.
- You behave extremely well in class and in the playground. You should be proud of this.
- Your teachers and other staff take very good care of you. They make sure you are happy and safe and check you are making enough progress with your work.
- Many of you are very grown up and help with running the school; the various 'buddies', for example, provide a valuable service for other pupils.

I think you and your teachers could make the school even better. I would like you to improve the quality of your mathematics. I have asked the staff to make sure that all the exciting things they give you to do are helping you to make as much progress as possible. I would also like the children in the Nursery and in Reception to have more opportunities to work and play in the lovely outdoor areas your school has.

You are lucky to go to such a caring and interesting school. Thank you again for helping me with the inspection. It really was a great pleasure to meet you.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil

Her Majesty's Inspector