

Benton Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108459
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	337081
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Alderman
Headteacher	Miss Alice Witherow
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, spent 70% of inspection time looking at learning across the school and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including the self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan and school policies, for example those relating to safeguarding and community cohesion. Questionnaires completed by 158 parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the consistency of pupils' learning and progress across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- attainment in writing, mathematics and science
- the consistency and effectiveness of teaching and assessment in ensuring challenge for all pupils
- the effectiveness of leaders in bringing about improvements
- whether pupils' contribution to the community, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, community cohesion and equality of opportunity are outstanding.

Information about the school

The school is slightly larger than average with more boys than girls. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is a higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than in most schools, including those whose first language is not believed to be English. An average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a higher proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs because the school has provision for 12 profoundly deaf pupils. A higher proportion of pupils than average join the school during the school year. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class.

The school is a designated Healthy School and has the Activemark award. It has the Bronze level local authority Environment Award and has gained the Financial Management in Schools Standard. The school is part of a Creative Partnership. It is an extended school, working in partnership with a cluster of local schools.

A breakfast club, after-school care and a holiday club are provided by a private provider. These were not subject to this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that provides a very caring and supportive environment in which pupils thrive and achieve well. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school's work in helping their children to enjoy school and be excited about learning.

The strong and determined leadership team, well supported by staff, has helped the school to improve significantly since the previous inspection, demonstrating good capacity to improve further. A very positive ethos enables staff and pupils to feel highly valued. A common focus on supporting each and every pupil, whatever the pupil's circumstances, in personal and academic development is clearly evident in the work of the school. Consequently, pupils are very happy in school and feel safe and secure. They develop into industrious yet very reflective individuals who are sensitive to the needs of others, within their own community and further afield. Pupils from all different groups represented in the school are exceptionally eager to take on responsibilities in the school and they thoroughly enjoy the challenges involved in making a real difference to the local community. Behaviour is good and pupils are keen and eager to learn. Pupils enjoy the recently improved curriculum that provides many exciting opportunities to stimulate their interest in learning.

Attainment in the school's most recent national tests was broadly average, although a little weaker in writing. These results represented good progress for these pupils. Attainment is rising in English, mathematics and science and good teaching results in pupils' good learning and progress. The significant number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are very well supported and make good progress. Well-managed provision for pupils attending the hearing impairment additionally resourced centre ensures that these pupils make good progress in the centre and in the main school environment and classrooms. Monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision is rigorous and ensures an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to improve. There is no complacency and the school recognises what needs to be done to raise standards further and to improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage to hasten children's progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further, in particular in writing, by:
 - making full use of assessment information to provide challenge for every pupil
 - ensuring pupils use key skills of literacy in all areas of the curriculum to a high

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standard

- ensuring that all marking helps all pupils to know how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision by:
 - making better use of outdoor spaces to develop learning across all areas of the curriculum
 - providing more opportunities for children to follow their own interests and use the skills they have acquired to work independently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy lessons. They concentrate well and most develop confidence in working independently as seen in their application to homework, particularly in topics that spark their interest and imagination. Pupils enjoy talking about work constructively to formulate ideas before contributing to class discussions. Pupils collaborate well to carry out tasks such as was seen in a Year 5 science lesson when they worked together on an investigation. Increasingly, pupils are benefiting from evaluating their own and each other's work.

Pupils learning English as an additional language are very well supported and make good progress. Pupils from the hearing impaired additional resource centre work very well alongside other pupils and benefit from sensitive and well-focused adult expertise. Other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of well-planned programmes of support.

At the start of Key Stage 1 within a very wide range of ability, pupils' numeracy and language skills are the weakest aspects. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points and attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has focused well on successfully improving approaches to learning in writing, mathematics and science. Analysis of tracking data and observation of pupils' work show that standards are rising in these subjects. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain challenging targets.

The school's very positive ethos successfully develops a high degree of empathy and sensitivity among pupils towards differences, as was observed in action during assembly about different talents. Pupils from different backgrounds have a good opportunity to influence decisions in the school through the 'Big Debate'. Pupils' secure basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT alongside the strong emphasis on attributes such as perseverance prepare them well for their futures. The attendance of most pupils is good but the long-term illness of a very small number of pupils adversely affects attendance, which has dipped to broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Very good relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to become confident learners. Lessons include a broad range of activities taught at a good pace so that pupils find lessons fun and interesting. Time is given to apply and consolidate learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know the purpose of lessons. They model activities clearly so that pupils know how to succeed. Teachers use questioning well to help develop pupils' thinking and to check understanding. Consequently, teachers adapt tasks accordingly. Frequent day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress helps to ensure that any gaps in learning are closed and that tasks are planned to match the needs of different groups of pupils. In a few lessons assessment information is not used precisely enough to ensure that every pupil, including some more-able pupils, is fully challenged. Teaching assistants skilfully support pupils' learning and contribute well to assessment. The effectiveness of marking is inconsistent. The best examples give encouragement to pupils, guidance on the next steps and set further challenges, whereas other marking gives little indication of how work can be improved.

The curriculum provides well-planned progression in developing English, mathematics, science and ICT and in improving broader key skills such as communication, collaboration and perseverance. Themes with visits or visitors excite pupils and stimulate interest and enthusiasm. However, the challenge is inconsistent. In some of their topic work pupils write to a good standard but in other topic work there is insufficient focus on achieving high-quality writing.

The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly their awareness of people different from themselves within the local

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community and further afield. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy the good variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities for creative art and music. The whole-school singing event in the City Hall is a highlight of many pupils' experiences as is the school's two-week summer creative event. The Creative Partnership project supports innovations and has led to pupils gaining a great deal from, for example, producing and editing films.

Staff are sensitive to pupils' individual needs and are quick to respond to pupils' concerns or difficulties and target support specifically. For example, additional support was provided for a small number of pupils likely to find their transition to secondary school difficult. More vulnerable groups are very well supported with much individual support and help from outside agencies as appropriate.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders set high expectations of themselves, other staff and pupils. Teamwork is effective with a relentless focus on raising standards and on improving learning and teaching. Performance management for all staff plays a key role in driving improvements. Rigorous monitoring of individual pupils' progress, and well-focused support for pupils alongside personalised training for staff, leads to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. A focus on raising standards in mathematics and science has led to accelerating progress in these areas. Some more recent initiatives, such as improving pupils' presentation and handwriting, have not yet had time to have full impact.

The school has a realistic view of its strengths and areas to develop. Governors increasingly support rigorous monitoring processes and know the school well. They hold the headteacher and other leaders to account and contribute well to the school's long-term development. A number have joined the governing body relatively recently. They bring much enthusiasm and experience and they are eager to undertake training to develop their skills more specifically.

Parents and carers are increasingly involved in supporting their children's learning and have appreciated the events the school has organised to help them to do so.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Appropriate recruitment checks are carried out and risk assessments are thorough.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school. There are no significant differences

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in the progress of pupils. There are differences in the performance of girls and boys from year group to year group but no significant pattern emerges. Much is done to ensure that all pupils have full access to all that the school offers.

The school has a coherent plan for the development of community cohesion and the work carried out is evaluated well for its impact on the school community. The school is a very cohesive community with pupils getting on very well together regardless of their many different cultural backgrounds. Much is done within the school and the local community to develop an understanding of differences. A project where pupils attempt to articulate an understanding of what it feels like to be old reflected their thoughtfulness and awareness of differences. The curriculum offers good opportunities for developing an understanding of different cultures globally. Plans to develop further links with different communities nationally and globally are not yet fully embedded.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Relationships between adults and children are good. Children play and learn happily alongside each other and are well behaved. They learn to take on responsibility for tidying up and following classroom routines. Activities are planned carefully around a theme that interests the children. They include a balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. However, there are few opportunities for children to follow up their own interests and use the skills they have developed to work independently. The good-quality outdoor spaces are not used to their full potential to promote children's interests and achievement. Assessment supports planning but occasionally it is not

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informing teaching to ensure the right level of challenge for every child. Well-focused speaking and listening is being used increasingly to support children's language development and thinking, particularly in role play in the Reception Year. When children start in Nursery there is a very wide range of levels of development and a significant proportion of children with complex learning needs or who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Levels of development are typical for children's ages in most areas of learning except in elements of literacy and numeracy, which are weaker. Children make satisfactory progress overall. By the time they leave Reception most children attain the levels of development expected for their age, although literacy and numeracy remain weaker.

The leadership team has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved. Through support and training adults have an increasingly secure knowledge and understanding of learning and development. Welfare requirements are met well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of the school in all respects and the inspection supports their positive views. They are particularly appreciative of the improvements that are evident in teaching, learning and progress and the curriculum since the last inspection. A very small number expressed concerns about the way pupils' misbehaviour was handled but the inspection team found no evidence to substantiate this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Benton Park Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 158 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 279 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	119	74	42	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	116	72	45	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	87	54	67	42	2	1	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	47	76	47	4	2	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	96	60	60	37	4	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	89	55	65	40	3	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	70	43	83	52	5	3	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	64	40	79	49	5	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	75	47	76	47	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	75	47	75	47	7	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	76	47	78	48	4	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	107	66	50	31	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	115	71	40	25	5	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Benton Park Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE7 7SS

Many thanks for the welcome you gave the inspectors. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out what you thought of your school.

Your school gives you a good education and its many strengths include the way you enjoy school and learning, behave well and are very sensitive to the needs of others. The way you help the school to run smoothly and the many ways you contribute to the community, for example through contact you have with elderly people locally, are outstanding. School leaders and staff work well as a team to ensure that every one of you is safe and well cared for. Good teaching makes lessons fun, interesting and challenging for most of you. Exciting activities, visits and visitors interest you and help you to make good progress and achieve well.

The leaders in your school have made your school a better place. They agree with the inspectors that there are a few things that can be better. We have asked the school to do these things.

- Improve the way teachers mark your work so that you know what you have to do to improve.
- Use what they know about you already to ensure that every one of you is challenged to do your very best.
- Improve the way the very youngest children learn by making better use of the outdoor spaces and by encouraging children to develop their own ideas and thinking when they are playing and exploring.

You can help by continuing to contribute your ideas to how things can improve through the school's 'Big Debate', and by continuing to do your best and be enthusiastic about the things you are learning. I wish you well for your futures and hope that you enjoy the rest of your time at Benton Park.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector

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