

Balliol Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108603
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	337109
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev David Gray
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Downes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom examined the school's safeguarding procedures. In looking at learning, the other inspector visited 10 lessons, totalling some six hours and saw all six teachers, most on two occasions. In addition, one hour was spent scrutinising a sample of pupils' work and a further hour making a case study of a vulnerable pupil. The inspector held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority. He observed the school's work, and looked at the data on pupils' performance, including their current progress, plans for the future and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. The responses to 23 parents' and carers' questionnaires were considered, alongside responses from staff and Key Stage 2 pupils' questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, to determine whether teaching is having sufficient impact on raising standards from the very low levels on entry
- the impact of actions taken to improve standards in mathematics and English
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in securing higher standards through the improved use of assessment
- the impact of teachers' planning and how well data is used to track pupils' progress in order to identify and tackle underachievement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age groups. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. The large majority of pupils are of White British background, but a few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds have joined the school, including, very recently, some of whom are at an early stage in learning English. The school currently operates an additionally funded resource base for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs. Larger than average proportions of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is much larger than average. A new headteacher took up post in September 2008.

The school has been awarded Healthy School Status and Investors in People Status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Balliol provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards are improving and pupils are achieving satisfactorily following a period of significant underachievement since the last inspection. Senior leaders' initiatives, taken recently to raise attainment, have been successful, particularly in mathematics. However, there are still weaknesses in the subject and in English, throughout the school.

The school has significant strengths in pastoral areas. The overall good care, guidance and support helps to ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school and their parents and carers appreciate the approach taken by the school where, they feel, every child does matter. It is particularly successful with pupils who attend through the integrated resource base, set up to help pupils who are transferred to Balliol because they have experienced difficulties in other schools. The school's good work to engage parents and carers means that a large majority express their support for the school. This is an inclusive school and pupils respond by making a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of how to live safely and healthily. The importance attached to pupils' well-being is reflected in the detailed attention given to providing a safe environment for all children and staff.

The majority of teaching is satisfactory rather than good, and this is a barrier to the school's efforts to raise pupils' achievement further. The main reason for the overall quality of teaching being satisfactory rather than good, is the relative weakness in planning and setting work which appropriately challenges pupils of different abilities. Recent improvements to the curriculum have made a positive impact on standards and pupils are enjoying the additional opportunities provided for them to read and write. The headteacher has extended leadership and management roles to involve more teachers in decision making and in taking specific responsibilities. There are still weaknesses in the way in which subject leaders undertake these roles, because they have not yet had sufficient training in how to monitor standards and to evaluate the quality of teaching. Effective changes, such as the thorough approach now adopted to charting pupils' progress, supported by detailed planning and realistic and broadly accurate self-evaluation, indicate that the school has a good capacity to sustain improvements. Financial control, planning and accountability are good and help to ensure the satisfactory value for money that the school produces.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve standards, by:

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- improving pupils' skills in calculation and problem-solving in mathematics
- extending the use of phonics to improve reading and writing throughout the school
- giving pupils even more opportunities to practise their writing in subjects across the curriculum, particularly in order to improve their skills in sentence construction.
- Raise the proportion of good teaching, by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan more precisely to meet the needs of different ability groups in their classes
 - putting the progress pupils make at the centre of evaluations about the effectiveness of teaching.
- Ensure that subject leaders make a stronger contribution to raising standards, by:
 - providing training so that they are better equipped to monitor teaching and learning and to measure the impact this has on raising standards.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most lessons, pupils' satisfactory and often good behaviour ensures that learning takes place without undue interruption. Where pupils who experience behavioural difficulties are likely to cause disruption, teachers are skilled in diffusing such situations and their classroom assistants provide experienced and valuable support. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science, but standards are low in most year groups. The introduction of programmes to improve reading and writing are starting to have an impact, but there is further work to do right across the school. This includes the development of phonics to improve reading and writing throughout the school and to extend the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. There have been significant improvements in mathematics, but pupils' skills in calculating and problem-solving are still too low. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils, progress well because of the extra support they are given. The school is becoming increasingly skilled at identifying potentially underachieving pupils and one-to-one sessions and booster classes are used effectively to get such pupils back on track.

When pupils' progress, attainment and enjoyment are taken together, their overall achievement is satisfactory. Typically, they show positive attitudes and cooperate well with teachers, other adults and with their peers when working together in lessons. All pupils develop an appropriate range of basic academic skills, including how to use new technology. This makes learning more meaningful and so improves pupils' enjoyment and engagement and helps to prepare them satisfactorily for the next phase of their education. Attendance is satisfactory. Despite the school's discouragement, too much

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absence occurs when a few parents and carers take their children on holiday during term time.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and safely. The school provides a range of sporting activities which attracts a good level of support from enthusiastic followers. The school council plays an active role in putting forward ideas and makes a valuable contribution to the school community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and they are open, welcoming and confident with visitors. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the wider community, including cultures abroad.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are some common strengths. The success with which staff manage pupils' behaviour is generally good. Teachers have a good understanding of how to help pupils to develop basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Relationships in lessons between adults and pupils are positive and help to engender good relationships between

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. This ensures that pupils enjoy lessons and work well in pairs and groups. Teachers' use of assessment data to guide and support pupils is a growing strength. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in their support of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, too many lessons are satisfactory rather than good, because not enough emphasis is placed on planning to ensure that good progress is made by different groups of pupils. Lesson planning lacks detail about precisely what teachers expect pupils of different abilities to learn.

There are effective links between the school and outside specialists to ensure good pastoral care, guidance and support, and some outstanding support for the most vulnerable pupils. These and other vulnerable pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, flourish as a result of the excellent care and guidance they receive, often making good progress. The curriculum is good. There is a wide range of after-school clubs and a residential experience for older pupils. These, along with the visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, make a good contribution to enriching the curriculum. The school has modified and improved its curriculum, which has already made an impact, but there is more work to do to help pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills in many subjects.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The headteacher has brought a clear vision to the school based on raising standards. This has resulted in significant changes, which have been handled sensitively and effectively, so that staff morale is high and there is a common purpose to secure further improvement. The school's tradition in providing good care and support for pupils and excellent provision for its most vulnerable pupils has been retained. Governors support the school well, challenge appropriately and ensure that the budget is used efficiently. The success in effecting improvement has started but has yet to be fully realised. Managers have not been well enough equipped to make the most of observing colleagues in the classroom or to judge the impact of the initiatives they introduce. For example, when monitoring the quality of teaching, insufficient attention is paid to the progress pupils make.

Partnerships with other schools are good, ensuring a flow of expertise into and from the school. There is a comprehensive range of policies in place and high among the

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priorities is an emphasis on ensuring that safeguarding procedures are up-to-date and effective. There are good procedures to ensure pupils experience equal opportunities in all aspects of their school life and the school is assiduous in tackling any form of discrimination. These factors and the good provision for community cohesion have their impact on the way in which pupils of varied backgrounds interact positively. This contributes well to the safe, happy and caring atmosphere which is evident throughout the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the past two years significant changes have been made in providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staffing has been increased and a new coordinator appointed. The new framework for teaching young children has been embraced and has given a clearer structure to learning. An effective assessment system has been trialled and improved and is now securely in place. All these factors have had a positive impact and provision has improved and is now good. Good quality leadership and management are ensuring that children achieve well. One barrier to further improvement is the lack of a covered outdoor space. As a result of the good progress being made, more children are nearer to achieving the expectations for their age by the end of the Reception Year. However, the often very low starting points when children enter the Nursery mean that their skills are still well below those expected.

The good links with parents and carers, as well as the good care and support given to children, help them to settle quickly and happily when they begin in the Nursery and when they transfer to the Reception class. Children feel safe and reflect this in their

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confident approach with adults. Additional adults provide good support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and this ensures that all children participate fully in activities. Teaching is good, based on good planning by teachers, reflecting their insight into how young children learn. This ensures exciting learning experiences through which children acquire new skills and knowledge. For example, a small group formed a percussion band, using a variety of instruments, as they accompanied Chinese music and tried to match some movements in a rudimentary dance, developing their creativity, as well as engaging in physical play. Children are learning to use ICT, which is used well to support and extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. Teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for children to make choices, and that daily activities are both adult and child-initiated.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspection confirmed that the school works hard to engage parents and carers and has good systems in place for them to meet with staff. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. No common concerns were expressed, although a few individual responses described particular problems they had experienced. Parents and carers find teachers to be approachable and say they are helped to support their children's learning at home. Parents and carers are aware of their children's progress and their targets, and are satisfied with their children's achievement. They appreciate the safe environment of the school where their children are happy and bullying is not an issue. As one parent said, 'Teachers have supported my son 100% through lots of different situations that have arisen. I couldn't ask for better'. Parents and carers praise the school and its staff for the ways they help children enjoy school and learn how to respect other people and other cultures.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Balliol 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 inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	52	9	39	2	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	57	9	39	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	43	11	48	2	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	30	13	57	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	43	13	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	48	8	35	4	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	48	12	52	0	0	0	0
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)	8	35	10	43	1	4	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	48	10	43	2	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	52	10	43	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	7	30	2	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	57	8	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	57	9	39	1	4	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.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Balliol Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 8QP

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for talking to me. I enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. I was impressed by your enthusiastic singing in assembly.

I like the way you take responsibility and have a pride in your school. You help to make your classrooms interesting places. I was also impressed by how well you all get on so well together, whether in the classrooms or out in the playgrounds. I appreciate how well your school helps you in learning to live healthily. Your teachers are very good in ensuring that you are safe and that you know how to live safely. You obviously enjoy your school and Year 6 told me they will be sorry to leave, but are also well prepared to go on to their next school in Year 7.

I found that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education because teaching is sound and the curriculum is planned well. This helps you to make satisfactory progress throughout your time at Balliol. You are doing better now in mathematics and enjoy your Read/Write activities which are improving your English.

To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to ensure that you continue to improve in mathematics and English, by developing some of your basic skills in writing and in calculating and problem-solving in mathematics. I have also asked that teachers plan even more carefully so that you all make the progress of which you are capable. Finally, I have asked that teachers who lead subjects are given more help to raise standards further. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bernard Jones

Lead inspector

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