

Biddick Hall Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108678
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	337119
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon John Miller
Headteacher	Mrs M Collinson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 60% of inspection time looking at learning, visited 24 lessons taught by eight teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

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

- the school's view that teaching is good in the light of what appears to be only satisfactory progress for pupils
- whether initiatives to improve pupils' writing and the way pupils' progress is tracked have helped to raise attainment
- in the light of a new senior leadership team, the school's capacity to improve
- how effectively the school helps pupils to develop an understanding of life in other countries and the multicultural make-up of modern British society.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average size. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has a unit for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2009.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school where pupils behave well, are happy, feel safe and know how to stay healthy. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school. Standards have declined in recent years so that attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Although teaching has some good elements, it is satisfactory overall. Activities provided for pupils are not yet stimulating enough to ensure that they make better than satisfactory progress. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. There is, however, too much emphasis on reinforcing skills rather than allowing pupils sufficient opportunities to practise them. Activities are not challenging enough, especially for the most able pupils. The school has much useful information about pupils' skills and abilities and is using this to target pupils who are falling behind so that they make expected progress. However, these data are not yet well enough used to ensure that planning for pupils' individual needs results in good progress. While marking is supportive, it does not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work. Older pupils say they would benefit from knowing the level of their work.

Attendance is average. Combined with some enterprise initiatives, linked to the school garden and competitions to raise money for charities, this contributes to pupils' satisfactory economic awareness. Pupils have a growing influence on what happens in school through the school council. There are too few occasions when they can explore local culture or the wider world so that their understanding of their heritage, life in other countries and the multicultural make-up of modern British society is underdeveloped.

The senior leadership team has identified that improvements in teaching, pupils' writing and the use of data to tackle underachievement are necessary to raise attainment. The new headteacher has devolved responsibility for the introduction and monitoring of initiatives to all leaders and so has developed a strong team ethos. However, leaders do not as yet monitor initiatives rigorously enough to ensure that they are having an impact on raising attainment and leaders' view of the quality of teaching and the curriculum is over-generous. However, given the satisfactory outcomes for pupils and the recent implementation of the school's strategies for further improving the provision, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, by 2011, by:
 - developing the range of those learning activities that offer pupils exciting opportunities for practical and investigative activities, so that pupils are

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involved and challenged in lessons

- ensuring that data are well used to develop teaching and learning, so that work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils
- improving the consistency of marking, so that pupils are clear about the level of their work and what they must do to improve it
- ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously monitor the impact on attainment of initiatives intended to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- Develop pupils' understanding of faiths and cultures and the multicultural nature of modern British society.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils behave well, are friendly, courteous and respectful of one another and the adults in school. They are very keen to do well and enjoy their learning when lessons are pacy and teachers encourage them to think for themselves, as seen during the inspection when they were analysing and creating pictures in the style of Magritte and Picasso. However, the extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is satisfactory because too few lessons offer scope for them to investigate independently or with their peers or to use their imaginations and creativity.

Attainment has fallen in recent years, so that pupils now reach average standards at the end of Year 6. Typically, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points, although there is evidence of underachievement in the results in national tests in 2009. The school has introduced measures to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind but teaching and the curriculum are not inspiring enough to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make better than satisfactory progress from their starting points.

Pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement in sporting and fitness activities and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school community, taking on a range of roles including playground friends, prefects and school councillors. The latter initiated improvements to playground equipment enjoyed by all pupils. There are satisfactory links in the local area through the Junior Mayor's Award, participation in performances at a local theatre and activities to improve the local environment. Involvement in fundraising activities, allied to average attendance and average basic skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT), prepares pupils satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
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	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good, teachers use a range of explanations, demonstrations and skilful questions which involve pupils and guide them step by step through their learning. These lessons have a brisk pace and teachers use a range of resources, including well-planned use of interactive whiteboard technology, to engage pupils so that they learn well. There are good relationships and pupils' good behaviour and attitudes contribute strongly to the positive learning ethos in lessons. Teachers prepare conscientiously but too often work is not clearly enough planned so that it offers activities which challenge pupils of all abilities. Teachers offer much support to help pupils to structure their writing or take next steps in mathematics. However, these structured activities limit pupils' creativity, exercises of a similar nature are repeated too often and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to talk about and develop their ideas with their peers. Teachers talk too much and time is lost when pupils could be doing activities which extend their learning. Teaching assistants are used appropriately to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is focused on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics and instilling knowledge and understanding about a range of topics in history, geography and science. For example, additional teaching of letter sounds for specific pupils is helping to improve their writing and there are good procedures to encourage reading. All pupils learn French and enjoy drumming, art and physical education. They enjoy

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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welcoming visitors to school, for example to learn about the ancient Greeks, and their own visits to places such as the local City Learning Centre to develop their ICT skills. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn through new experiences, to develop their skills in writing and mathematics in learning across the curriculum or to see the links between subjects. It is not always clear how work becomes harder as pupils grow older. Pupils participate in a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts.

Pupils benefit from sensitive care by all staff. Provision for vulnerable pupils and those with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including visual impairment and behavioural difficulties, is well managed and there are many appropriate programmes for intervention and support so that these pupils make satisfactory progress. Despite the best efforts of the school, there remains a minority of pupils who are persistent absentees. Well-established practices to involve parents and carers when their children enter school have been enhanced by the introduction of family learning sessions so that parents and carers of Year 3 pupils can help their children learn at home. Satisfactory procedures as pupils move through school and developing partnerships with a number of local secondary schools ensure that pupils are prepared for the next phase of their education.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The new senior leadership team has a clear understanding that attainment has to rise and has identified, correctly, improving teaching and refining systems for tracking pupils' progress as key areas for development. Leaders at all levels are increasingly involved in decision making and have contributed to the school improvement plan. There is a clear programme for continuous professional development and monitoring the impact of initiatives. However, while there is evidence that tracking is identifying pupils who need extra support, the analysis of teaching is not rigorous enough and there is too little focus on how teaching can best develop pupils as learners. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and has very close and effective links with outside agencies to meet the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds and their families, showing the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. However, the school has developed too few partnerships that enrich and broaden pupils' learning

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experiences.

Governors recognise that they have not been proactive enough in addressing declining standards but now offer satisfactory challenge and support to the school's ambition to raise attainment. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and satisfactorily secure pupils' safety. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong but there is less awareness of life in other countries, of the history of South Shields or its place in the development of Britain's diverse and multicultural society. The school has satisfactory relationships with parents and carers, who are provided with frequent information about their children.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A total of 74 parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and analysis showed that support for the school is very strong. All parents and carers support the work of the school and the way it helps pupils to feel safe and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the new headteacher and the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. Inspectors agree that pupils are safe and happy in school. However, they believe that the learning experience is not exciting enough for pupils and that their needs are only met satisfactorily.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Biddick Hall Junior 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	50	35	47	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	62	28	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	41	39	53	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	45	40	54	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	51	36	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	43	40	54	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	50	37	50	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)	33	45	37	50	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	46	39	53	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	53	31	42	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	45	40	54	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	59	30	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	58	31	42	0	0	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.



05 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Biddick Hall Junior School, South Shields, NE34 9SP

On behalf of the team, thank you very much for making us welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a satisfactory school which knows what to do to improve. You are polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and because you all get on very well together. You like to take on responsibilities and enjoy visits and visitors who help to make your learning more interesting. Your parents and carers like the school very much. The staff care for you well and work hard to help you to develop your skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

I have asked your teachers to do the following things to help your school to improve.

- Help you to attain higher standards at the end of Year 6.
- Make sure that your lessons are more exciting and challenging, with teachers matching tasks and activities to your needs in all classes and making sure that you know how to improve your work.
- Make sure that teachers check that the new ideas they introduce to make your lessons better are working well.
- Help you to learn more about your local heritage, life in other countries and the people from different cultures who live in Britain.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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