

Nettlesworth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114005
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338271
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sonia Duncan
Headteacher	Mrs Leonora Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 52% of their time looking at learning. They visited 11 lessons, observing 4 teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment information about pupils' progress and updates of progress towards meeting targets. They also considered questionnaire responses from 35 pupils, 12 members of staff and 46 parents and carers.

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

- how well improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage have impacted upon the quality of children's learning
- whether Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils' current attainment in English provide evidence of sustained improvement
- how well the curriculum, including pupils' cultural understanding, contributes to their understanding of the wider world
- whether all leaders are ensuring effective challenge and improved outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a village with former mining connections where the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. About one fifth of pupils travel to school from surrounding areas. Most pupils are from a White British background. Of those from other cultural backgrounds, very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than found nationally, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Reception-age children are taught alongside pupils in Key Stage 1.

The school holds the following awards: Investing in Children, Gold Clean Air, Silver Eco-Schools, Financial Management in Schools, Activemark, Basic Skills and Healthy Schools.

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

At the very heart of this welcoming school are the extremely caring relationships that ensure highly successful support for pupils. The school vision of 'Together Everyone Achieves More Success' contributes considerably to the good outcomes achieved. Communication with parents and carers is excellent and an overwhelming proportion of them applaud the dedication of the school to provide 'a big family environment where everyone is valued.' Colourful and exciting learning opportunities provide pupils with experiences which engage their interest and enthusiasm. Most pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to this school where they feel extremely safe. Their behaviour is exceptional and they engage wholeheartedly in their work to make good progress. A number of well-chosen strategies enable pupils to have a voice in the school, which they use well to identify issues and make improvements.

Small cohorts contribute to some variance in attainment year on year. Overall, from entry points below those expected for their age, pupils leave with standards in line with national averages. The good progress most pupils make through school ensures that they meet the targets set for them. Good teaching and relationships motivate pupils to engage in learning. Progress is tracked rigorously. However, the use of assessment information to meet individual needs is not tuned finely enough and this can contribute to inconsistencies in achievement. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils using a range of strategies and outside agencies to support families. Despite this, attendance is low, largely due to a small number of pupils who are persistently absent. The needs of those who are vulnerable, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well met, enabling these pupils to make good progress in line with their peers. Overall, outcomes for pupils are good and the school provides good value for money.

Leaders have a good understanding of the qualities of the school. Self-evaluation successfully identifies key areas for action, leading to effective improvements. Areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed, for example there is a more exciting and creative Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and there are greatly enhanced opportunities for developing pupils' cultural understanding. These, together with other improvements, support the good capacity of the school for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by reducing persistent absenteeism.

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- Ensure the effective use of assessment information across the school, by:
 - leaders rigorously checking that tasks set in lessons challenge pupils to make consistently good progress and that teachers' marking is helpful in enabling pupils to know what they have achieved and how to improve their work.

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

Pupils' clear enjoyment of school and their outstanding behaviour contribute highly to the progress they make. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this contributes considerably to their motivation to learn. Best progress is made in lessons where pupils understand how well they achieve against their individual targets. Learning is especially good where pupils have opportunities to discuss and work cooperatively to solve problems. The good progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues through Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 overall attainment is in line with national levels, with an appropriate proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 5. Pupils make good progress, overall; however, there are inconsistencies between classes. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the carefully tailored support they receive. The small numbers of pupils who join the school with limited English make good progress because their needs are identified quickly and support is rapid and effective.

Pupils are extremely secure that staff will quickly help them with concerns. They speak knowledgeably about how to deal with different situations which may arise, for example when using the internet. Pupils understand the need to eat sensibly and a high proportion take advantage of the well-prepared, healthy lunches. Many take advantage of a wide range of additional activities to extend their physical well-being through a good range of sport and dance opportunities. Most pupils attend well; however, the absences of a small proportion of pupils impacts strongly upon overall attendance and, in turn, affects these pupils' individual progress and overall achievement. Pupils love school and talk enthusiastically about their contribution to the school and the wider community. They have a very strong sense of individual rights and responsibilities and this is reflected successfully in their good personal outcomes. Respect for themselves and others, evidenced in their cooperation through their house teams, is very strong. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their future learning.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers successfully use different strategies to engage pupils in learning. Interactive whiteboards are used well to demonstrate and model expectations and there are well-planned opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. Teachers share objectives with pupils enabling them to understand the purpose of the lesson and what is expected of them. Assessment is rigorous and clearly identifies the progress pupils make over time. However, not all teachers use this information effectively enough to address the differing needs of individual pupils to ensure that they are always challenged and this can limit progress for some pupils. Marking is regular, but is not used consistently to confirm individual pupils' achievement against individual targets nor to identify their next steps in learning. Teachers are very well supported by the good quality work of assistants in the classroom.

A rich curriculum provides a range of well-planned activities, which are effectively supported by a range of visits and visitors and which promote good citizenship. Recent developments to extend meaningful links between subjects are at an early stage of development but there are increasing opportunities to apply skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum. Work on the 'Big Write' and phonics is helping to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils greatly benefit from a wide range of additional experiences outside school that are well attended. They readily take up opportunities to interact with other schools, which enables further enhancement of pupils' skills and abilities.

A strong caring and inclusive nature is central to this school. Pupils' safety is of high importance and safeguarding requirements are good. Sensitive, rapid and highly

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effective support for vulnerable pupils and for those with difficulties in learning, together with increased challenge for those who are gifted and talented, ensure that individual needs are quickly highlighted and successfully addressed. Well-deployed strategies underpin pertinent interventions which include highly individual learning and personal development programmes. Low attendance continues despite the implementation of strategies by the school and external agencies to reduce the individual absence of a small number of pupils. The excellent communication between staff and parents and carers, and good links with other agencies, mean that most barriers to learning are quickly overcome. However, for the few pupils who are absent a great deal, this has a significant impact upon their progress. Staff work closely with parents and carers, and other schools, to ensure that pupils settle quickly and transfer confidently.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers understand the school well and work closely to maintain a strong focus upon developing well-rounded pupils. The school has a very good reputation in the community and there is high regard for the work of teachers and leaders. The strong team spirit successfully encourages all to strive for continual improvement. Plans for development are supported by accurate self-assessment which informs strategies to move improvement forward. The school is effective in promoting equal opportunity and in tackling discrimination. Good use is made of monitoring and evaluation to improve the quality of teaching and other areas of provision. Relative weaknesses in pupils' reading and writing skills have been successfully addressed, evidenced by the rising standards in literacy. However, checks on the quality of lesson planning and of the usefulness of feedback to pupils about their achievements and next steps in learning are not yet rigorous enough.

Pupils flourish in this highly cohesive school community. Good partnerships with outside agencies and outstanding links with parents and carers ensure that pupils are well supported. The school supports community cohesion well. Within this, a developing strength is in pupils' knowledge of citizenship and their role within the wider cultural community, both locally and internationally. Effective work to promote pupils' understanding of their individual rights and the rights of others underpins the ethos of the school. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Governors are supportively led by the headteacher and her team to acknowledge its qualities and

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understand why areas are identified for improvement. Their understanding of statutory requirements means that safeguarding arrangements are well developed and documented, creating a secure environment for pupils and staff.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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 enter the school with skills below the levels expected for their age. They settle quickly in the very positive and secure environment. Good relationships between children and with their teachers contribute to their growing confidence and rapidly developing independence. Children work happily together. They share, take turns and accept responsibility, learning simple rules which contribute to their safety and well-being. The needs of those with special educational needs and/or difficulties, and with English as an additional language, are extremely well met. By the time children are ready to enter Year 1 most achieve in line with national expectations.

Children love coming to school. Teachers take into account individual needs and interests, making the best use of resources to engage children in activities. In many cases, children initiate their own learning. The recently developed outdoor resources provide a good range of activities which include opportunities to access large apparatus. However, gaining access to this provision is limited by the building which can restrict children in their choice of how, and where, they engage in learning. Staff observe very closely and effectively record the progress children make. These records are shared with children, and parents and carers, through 'learning journeys' which are extremely comprehensive and well presented. Teachers use these effectively to identify children's next steps in learning.

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A common sense of purpose means that staff work well together to ensure that children progress well in their learning and are safe and secure. Since the last inspection new ways of learning and improved resources have enhanced opportunities for children to learn in a setting which celebrates success and increases their independence. Policies and procedures are consistently applied, contributing to the high security of the setting. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the setting and areas for future improvement have been identified. Children's needs are well met, supported by highly effective partnerships with parents and carers, and a range of external partners.

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 overwhelming majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. They hold the headteacher and her staff in very high regard and greatly appreciate the care and consideration given to their children. They are confident that any concerns are listened to carefully and acted upon appropriately. The school received considerable praise for the efforts it makes to provide a very caring environment. For example, one parent noted that the school 'empowers children .. taking into account individual needs and abilities.' No concerns were raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nettlesworth 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 66 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	85	7	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	93	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	85	7	15	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	87	6	13	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	87	6	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	85	6	13	1	2	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)	36	78	8	17	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	85	6	13	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	85	7	15	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	87	6	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	89	5	11	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.



8 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nettlesworth Primary School, Chester le Street, DH2 3PF

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to many of you and particularly liked the way in which you respect and care about each other and your school. Thank you especially to those of you who gave up your time to talk to us.

Staff take outstanding care of you and you told us that they are always there to help you when you have concerns. This means that you feel very safe and confident and you learn well and make good progress. You feel that your school is a really happy place and your parents and carers agree with you. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the many wonderful contributions you made to the school. It was good to hear how your responsibilities develop as you get older and how you help the staff. You obviously enjoy the many experiences your school provides because you listen well and work hard to complete the tasks your teachers set. The many opportunities your school provides to visit places, to work with different people and take part in lots of after-school activities help you to learn about the big world in which we live.

We found out that your good school has many strengths, but there are some things that need to improve to help you to achieve even more. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do these things.

- Make sure that everyone attends school regularly. Some pupils do not come to school as much as they should and this means that they miss a lot of work.
- Make sure that all teachers provide you all with individual targets and that your tasks meet these needs. I have asked for teachers' marking to show you what you have achieved against these targets and what you need to do next to progress to the next level. I have also asked your headteacher to check on how well teachers are achieving this.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kate Pringle

Lead inspector

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