

Bloemfontein Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114034
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338277
Inspection dates	18–19 January 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tracy Davinson
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Abbott
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 40% of inspection time looking at learning, visited 10 lessons and saw 4 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 34 questionnaires returned by parents 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 effectiveness of the quality of teaching and the curriculum and their impact on pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of strategies to raise pupils' progress and attainment, especially in English, and for boys
- how effectively the needs of individual pupils in mixed-age classes are met, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1
- how effectively the new leadership team understands what needs to be done to bring about improvement in the school.

Information about the school

Bloemfontein Primary School is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need are well above the national average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Activemark, Intermediate International Schools and Artsmark Silver awards. Children enter the Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn term and are taught alongside older pupils. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009 and the deputy headteacher since January 2010.

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

Bloemfontein is a satisfactory school where good care and support ensure that pupils' well-being, personal development and good behaviour are promoted well. As a result, pupils are happy, feel safe and know how to stay healthy. Parents are very supportive of the school. Pupils attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are average in mathematics and science, but low in English. Progress in mathematics is good because teaching is more clearly matched to pupils' needs and offers more opportunities to practise their skills. In English lessons, there are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas or to write at length and work is not well enough matched to the abilities of individual pupils.

Although teaching has some good elements, it is satisfactory overall. Activities provided for the pupils are not yet stimulating enough to ensure they make better than satisfactory progress. While teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage supports social development well, there are too few opportunities for children to improve their skills in literacy. This has the effect of making attainment by the end of Year 2 lower than it could be. Attendance is average and improving. Combined with enterprise initiatives, linked to the school allotment and tuck shop, this contributes to pupils' satisfactory economic awareness. Pupils have a growing influence on what happens in school, a developing understanding of other faiths and cultures and of the multi-cultural make-up of modern British society, as well as a good knowledge of local culture and life in other countries.

The headteacher has established a strong team ethos and all teachers have been involved in the analysis of the school's effectiveness and in planning for improvement. The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and of what needs to be done to ensure it improves even further. They are developing strategies to raise attainment for boys especially and in English that involve a clearer focus on reading and offer more regular opportunities to write in different styles. The school has a great deal of test data and information about pupils' progress and uses these to plan work at different levels for groups of pupils. It has not yet refined this process well enough to ensure that planning for pupils' individual needs result 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. 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?

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- Raise attainment, especially in English and in Key Stage 1, by:
 - further developing the range of those learning activities that offer pupils opportunities for practical and investigative activities, so that they are involved and challenged in more lessons
 - ensuring that data is 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 what they must do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - offering children more opportunities to learn through activities which are well-targeted to develop their skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy.
- 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**

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is satisfactory. Pupils behave well, have good attitudes and relationships in lessons and show great keenness to do well in their work. They enjoy their learning especially when they are involved in lively activities, such as, using role play to create interviews with Greek heroes or share ideas for their pirate stories and when they are discussing books to improve their reading. They speak enthusiastically about their residential visit to the Middleton-in-Teesdale Centre for outdoor activities.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, but learning is not quick enough to raise attainment appreciably by the end of Year 2. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average, although it is higher in mathematics than in English. Pupils have made good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 to attain average standards, but only satisfactory progress in English to attain standards which are low. This is because teaching has been stronger in mathematics and ensures that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils show good achievement in sport and the arts, in activities which excite them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement in sporting activities, the large number of pupils who attend out-of-school sporting activities, such as, running and swimming and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school and say they feel safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a problem.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, taking on a range of roles, such as, playground helpers and school council members. There are good links in the

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local area through work on the local newsletter and the creation of a banner with the Craghead Community Partnership. They raise money for international charities and donate funds to an African village. They visit places of worship in different faiths, take part in international dance and music festivals, have links with a school in France and have made contact with a school in Bloemfontein in South Africa. Therefore, their understanding of different faiths and of life in other parts of the world is well-developed. They have an increasing understanding of the multi-cultural make-up of modern British society. They have developed a satisfactory understanding of the world of work through enterprise activities based around the school garden and the tuck shop.

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	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	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?

While teaching is satisfactory overall, it has many good features. In good lessons, teachers guide learning well and promote understanding through games, investigation and interactive whiteboard technology. There are good relationships and teachers skilfully manage a wide range of pupils' behavioural and learning needs. Teachers are beginning to use speaking and drama activities to help pupils develop their ideas for

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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writing. However, as yet, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn in this way. Moreover, there are also too few opportunities for pupils to write at length or in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers make it clear what pupils are to learn in the lesson and use questions well to find out what pupils already know. However, they use questions less effectively to encourage pupils to extend their ideas. While work is planned to match the abilities and not the age of the pupils in mixed-age classes, the needs of individual pupils are not met well enough. This means that introductory activities are often not challenging enough for the most-able and time is lost when pupils could be doing activities which extend them. Nevertheless, teaching assistants are used appropriately to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily and offers pupils an increasing range of activities designed to improve their basic skills. There is a strong focus on learning about life in other countries, about Christianity and other faiths. All pupils learn French and enjoy singing, performing in The Sage, Gateshead. They enjoy welcoming visitors to school and their own visits to places, such as, Beamish Museum, which supported their work about a local mining disaster. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in learning across the curriculum or to see the links between subjects. They participate enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts. Pupils benefit from the good quality of care by all staff. Provision for vulnerable pupils and those pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with autism and behavioural difficulties, is well managed. There are many appropriate programmes for intervention and support so that these pupils make satisfactory progress. Well established practices to involve parents when their children enter school, good procedures as pupils move through school and effective partnership with the local secondary school, all ensure that pupils are well 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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established a clear view of the school's effectiveness and is building on strategies, which have been introduced to raise attainment and involving staff in planning new initiatives. The deputy headteacher has been responsible for managing strategies to improve boys' achievement, writing in general and the improvements in mathematics. They have identified, correctly, creating a livelier

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curriculum, improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and refining systems for tracking pupils' progress as key areas for development. All staff are increasingly involved in decision-making and have contributed to the school improvement plan. There is a clear programme of continuing professional development which is focused on key priorities and which, as well as working closely with the local authority, involves nationwide expertise to advance the school's improvement. The school is proud of its inclusive nature. It has close links with outside agencies to support the wide range of individual needs of pupils showing the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times.

Governors have been instrumental in supporting the school and are developing procedures for evaluating subject areas. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good, meet government requirements and secure pupils' safety. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community. There is a good awareness of life in other countries and a clear understanding of Britain as a diverse, multicultural society. The school has good 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	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	3
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

Children make satisfactory progress from their attainment on entry which is lower than expected nationally. Staff involve parents well so that they to get to know the children

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before they start in the Reception class and so that they can continue to support the children at home. There is a strong focus on activities which support children's social and emotional development, so that they gradually become more confident when working with others and behave increasingly well. Children know about staying healthy and both boys and girls enjoy physical activities, such as, building with large blocks and they make good progress in their physical development. They enjoyed the investigation they did when looking at the ice patterns created in water frozen in a balloon.

Welfare requirements are met and children are cared for well. While there is a strong focus on phonics, it is not always clearly targeted on individual children's needs and as yet there are too few activities which specifically develop opportunities for children to develop early writing and reading skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactorily managed and the leader has a strong commitment to children's development. There are clear procedures to monitor and record children's progress, although it is not clearly enough used to target the needs of the more-able children in the mixed-age class. The outdoor provision is appropriately resourced and children enjoy outdoor learning. Staff are involved in continuing professional development designed to increase understanding of how children learn best.

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

A total of 34 parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and analysis showed that support for the school is very strong. Most parents and carers support the work of the school and the way it helps pupils to feel safe, be healthy and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers are also strongly supportive of the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. However, a very small minority indicated that they believed the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors do not agree that this is an area for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bloemfontein 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	50	16	47	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	53	14	41	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	32	22	65	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	32	21	62	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	38	19	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	35	19	56	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	44	19	56	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)	12	35	21	62	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	29	23	68	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	18	53	5	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	35	19	56	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	44	16	47	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	44	18	53	1	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.



11 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bloemfontein Primary School, Stanley, DH9 6AG

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

You go to a satisfactory school, which knows what to do to make itself better. The team was impressed by the pride you take in your work and how hard you work in lessons. You behave well, show respect for one another and look after one another caringly. 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 appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as residential visits, trips and sports activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much. Teachers care for you very much and help you to learn well in mathematics, but your writing skills are below what they should be.

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

- help you to reach higher standards in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 6, especially in English
- 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 the youngest children in school have plenty of activities to develop their skills in reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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