

Consett Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114051
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338285
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Parker
Headteacher	Mrs A Wilmot
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Beechdale Road Consett County Durham DH8 6AY
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the chairman of governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan. They conducted a scrutiny of the work in pupils' books and looked at minutes of meetings and the procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress. They also scrutinised the 124 parent, 100 pupil and 8 staff questionnaires which were returned.

- the quality of pupils' work and their progress
- records to show if the school's expectations that standards are rising are well founded
- the progress made since the previous inspection and the school's capacity for sustained improvement
- the extent to which pupils have the basic skills and personal qualities to make the most of the next stage in their education
- safeguarding arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare.

Information about the school

The school is an average sized junior school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average; that of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is average, although the percentage with a statement of need is well above that normally seen. Pupils are predominantly white British. Very few pupils originate from outside the United Kingdom and of those none are at an early stage of learning English. The school has various awards, including Basic Skills Quality Mark, Arts Mark 'Gold', Active award, the Football Association Charter award, Healthy Schools Standard and Investors in People.

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

Over time, standards have been average and pupils' progress and their levels of achievement have been satisfactory. In the 2009 national tests for Year 6 pupils, results dipped slightly in English and declined markedly in mathematics and science.

Achievement was inadequate in these two subjects. The school's assessment records and the quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection show that this past underachievement in mathematics and the dip in English have been reversed. Progress is improving in science and standards are rising but they remain below average.

Performance targets are insufficiently challenging in the subject.

Pupils' personal development is good. They are confident and articulate, behave well and enjoy school. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and well, eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. They say they feel safe in school and inspection evidence shows they are. They make a good contribution to their own and the wider community through a wide range of activities. Attendance rates are slightly above the national average. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Highly effective practice was seen but there is insufficient teaching of this quality to lift the rate of pupils' learning and progress from satisfactory to good. In the satisfactory lessons there is often an inefficient use of time and learning activities lack challenge. The curriculum makes satisfactory provision for pupils' learning and there are strong features in the wide range of additional experiences it provides. The quantity and quality of experimental work has improved significantly but insufficient time is given to topics in material and physical science. Good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' good personal and satisfactory academic development.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection in pupils' problem solving and investigative skills and their ability to use mathematical skills in other subjects. Improvement planning focuses on appropriate priorities to take the school forward. The school's capacity to raise the bar further is satisfactory. Procedures to monitor the implementation and impact of agreed policies and procedures are not yet fully established. Governors are supportive of the school and give generously of their time to meetings and school events. Safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by:

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- setting challenging targets for pupils and monitoring their progress towards them
- improving the monitoring of provision and its impact on pupils' progress, particularly in science
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by:
 - better use of time
 - ensuring that learning activities are levelled in difficulty to meet the needs of all pupils
- 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 are keen to learn, work well collaboratively and show initiative when tackling independent research projects. This was seen in the work Year 5 carried out in the local community to map services and amenities and analyse their findings. The contribution pupils make to the school and wider community is extensive and they gain in confidence and maturity from such experiences. Buddies and mediators encourage the younger pupils to speak out about any worries and they help them to resolve differences amicably and quickly. The school council has raised money to get better play equipment and has suggested and secured improvements to travel arrangements to and from school. Music and the performing arts play a major role in pupils' lives and contribute greatly to community cohesion in and outside of school. Displays around the school and in classrooms testify to the breadth of pupils' work and wide range of experiences.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have good speaking and listening skills and use information and communication technology (ICT) well when working independently. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand the cultural and religious diversity of society and they show sensitivity and creativity in their art, music and writing. Their preparation for their future economic well-being, however, is no better than satisfactory because academic achievement is not as high as it could be.

Pupils use their basic skills flexibly in different contexts. This was seen in a Year 3 modern foreign language lesson where pupils made good use of ICT to present a French text, thus improving their reading skills as well as those of speaking and listening. The development of literacy skills was seen in a Year 4 science lesson where pupils used technical words accurately to explain the earth's water cycle. Such competencies are preparing them well for the next stage in their education. However, pupils' academic progress is no better than satisfactory and this limits the overall preparation for the future to satisfactory. The school accepts this and has put in place measures to speed the rate of progress. There is evidence that these are beginning to have an impact. In English and mathematics, for example, the school's records show that about 90% of the pupils in Year 6 are well placed to attain at level 4 or above in the national tests. The

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quality of the work in pupils' books bears this out. Science assessments have not been conducted with the same frequency and rigour as in the other two core subjects but inspection evidence shows an improving picture from well below average attainment in 2009.

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	1
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?

Teaching is always at least satisfactory and often good but the proportion of stronger teaching is insufficient to enable pupils to make good rather than satisfactory progress. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of the time available because they plan a wide variety of activities to engage the pupils fully and develop their knowledge, understanding and basic skills at a fast pace. In all lessons, explanations are clear and relationships between teachers and pupils are uniformly good. However, in the satisfactory lessons, teachers tend to speak for too long and pupils are often given too much time to complete their tasks. This means that the pace of learning is less than it might be. The work of classroom assistants successfully enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress at the same rate as other pupils.

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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The quality of assessment varies. Pupils always receive helpful feedback in class as lessons proceed so they know what they need to do to improve their work. Helpful feedback is also provided to pupils through thorough teachers' marking of their written and numerical work but it is not always as helpful in science.

The curriculum provides pupils of all levels of ability to make adequate progress in their learning particularly in basic skills. There are many strong features which provide pupils with a wide range of additional experiences. For example, there are many extra-curricular activities in a variety of sports and really good opportunities for all pupils in outdoor education. A particularly strong feature is the opportunity that all pupils have to take part in musical, choral and dance productions outside school. A quarter of the school's pupils are currently learning to play an instrument. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended the use and development of pupils' numerical skills in the other subjects that they study. The quantity and quality of experimental work in science has also improved but coverage of the National Curriculum in this subject is uneven. Investigative work and human, animal and plant biology are covered well but pupils' work shows that insufficient time has been given to the study of physical processes and materials and their properties.

Good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils recognise that help is always on hand and that they will receive support when they need it. The school provides a very welcoming atmosphere for pupils from the time that they arrive in Year 3. Very good induction procedures help to make a smooth transition from the infant schools and from Year 6 into the local secondary schools. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive good support and guidance through links with outside agencies and a range of effective strategies and interventions. These are often provided by skilled and dedicated teaching assistants. The school is justifiably proud of several really successful programmes and interventions that have really made a difference to pupils' life chances.

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 leadership team is relatively new and has already made an impact on pupils' learning and progress. In addition to securing the reversal of the 2009 underachievement in mathematics and raising standards in English and science, the

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school's tracking of pupils' progress over time is now good. Systems to monitor the impact of provision and to make sure that agreed policies and procedures are implemented consistently across the school are not fully established. Development plans lack milestones and precise time limits to measure progress and so take corrective action when the drive for improvement lags. Challenging performance targets have been set for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics but this needs to be done for all subjects and in particular for science. The leadership of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching and identify good practice but its dissemination lacks urgency.. Leaders and managers have been successful in creating a harmonious and calm learning community where differences are respected. The impact of the school's work in the local and wider community is marked and its international dimension is broadening pupils' horizons. It is therefore making a good contribution to community cohesion. The good care and support it provides ensures an equal chance for every boy and girl and means that all pupils progress equally well. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Arrangements for child protection and for the checking of the identities of all adults working with children are firmly in place.

There are good links with parents and carers. Many were involved recently in reviewing and improving the arrangements for school travel. There are regular consultation meetings and parents say they are kept well informed. Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities and are closely involved in the day to day life of the school. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are well informed about the views of parents and carers and others living in the local community. However, their monitoring of how policies are working out on the ground and how improvement plans are impacting on pupils' progress lacks rigour.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
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Views of parents and carers

An overwhelming majority of those who responded to the questionnaire said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the good care and support the school provides for all pupils and their good personal development. It also reflects the school's success in developing good links with parents and carers as partners in their children's education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Consett 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 191 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	56	52	42	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	40	71	57	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	39	72	58	58	47	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	50	61	49	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	50	61	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	39	66	53	10	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	39	71	57	3	2	2	2
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)	40	32	71	57	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	37	70	56	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	40	74	60	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	43	67	54	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	41	70	56	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	51	58	47	1	1	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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited you recently and for making our time with you so enjoyable. It is good to see you growing up into confident and thoughtful young people. We only wished we had had more time to listen to more of your music and see some of your productions.

We found your school to be providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of work we saw has improved since the test results held in the summer and pupils in Year 6 are well placed to reach the national expected levels by the time they leave. Pupils throughout the school are making satisfactory progress in their learning. We have asked the school to set you even more challenging targets and to give you timed learning activities which make you think hard. You have a very important part to play in this by continuing to work hard, so your parents and teachers can be really proud of you.

We were pleased to see how well behaved you are in your lessons and around the school. We know you feel safe and secure when you are in school. You talked to us about how to keep fit and well and we judged that you are making every effort to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Congratulations on this because it is so important to look after yourselves well.

Your teachers work hard to provide interesting work for you. You are particular good at expressing your ideas and you clearly enjoy sharing these with your classmates. You support charities well and do a lot in the local community. You care for the environment, as we saw from the records of your work at Robinwood, and enjoy the many and varied activities and clubs outside of lessons.

Thank you again for being so helpful and don't forget, the harder you work, the more choices you will have about your future life opportunities.

Yours sincerely

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