

Bearpark Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114129
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338301
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Teasdale
Headteacher	Mr L Owen
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. As well as short visits to parts of lessons taught by visiting teachers, five teachers in the school were observed in extended visits to four lessons. Inspectors examined a variety of examples of pupils' written work and held meetings with a governor, teachers and a group of pupils. They scrutinised the school's child protection and safeguarding documentation, information about the curriculum, development plans, records of pupils' progress and minutes of meetings. They analysed 28 questionnaires from parents and carers, 53 from pupils in Key Stage 2 and seven from members of staff.

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

- the attainment and progress of children in the Reception Year of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the attainment and progress of pupils, particularly boys
- pupils' work in lessons and how well it is matched to pupils' abilities so that pupils are able to work independently when appropriate and higher-attainers are successfully challenged
- teachers' marking and how consistently it improves pupils' work throughout the school.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average-size school serves an ex-mining village community to the west of Durham City. All pupils are of a White British heritage. A high proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although none has a statement of special educational needs. The school has Healthy School status, the Activemark and the advanced award for Quality in Study Support.

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

Bearpark Primary school is caring and welcoming. All staff uphold values of respect and consideration for others so that most areas of pupils' personal development are good. Since the last inspection, several aspects of its work have become good or are developing well. A successfully implemented initiative has led to higher writing standards. Attainment in English rose to average last year and standards have been maintained this year. Although pupils' mathematics attainment also rose last year, it has slipped a little this year. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. Good quality care, guidance and support underpin the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Accurate self-evaluation sets out appropriate priorities for attention but the school's plans for improvement are too complicated to be a really useful tool to chart developments and measure success. Taking all this into account, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils have many opportunities which strengthen their awareness of risk. Bullying is rare and staff respond quickly and effectively to any occurrence. In turn, pupils feel very much at ease, behave well and conduct themselves safely and very considerately. Carefully managed, productive partnerships with local agencies and community organisations widen pupils' horizons and enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils, enthusiastically, take part in activities that help them maintain healthy lifestyles. They contribute well in many ways to school and local community projects.

Teaching quality is not consistent throughout the school but school leaders are determined to draw on the strengths and expertise among staff to improve teaching and help more pupils to learn well and make good progress. Marking on pupils' work follows a consistent style, although teachers' comments to help pupils improve, especially in mathematics, are not sufficiently precise to point the pupils to the next level. Work within the curriculum and strong international links develop community cohesion but pupils have too few opportunities to experience the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the extent of good progress and raise standards further, especially in mathematics, by:
 - simplifying development planning and setting out criteria for success in a way that is clear and focused directly on the impact actions taken should have on accelerating progress

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- building upon the skilful and effective approaches some teachers use to increase the quality of teaching throughout the school
- increasing the usefulness of marking by always giving pupils clear pointers to improve the standard of their work.
- Enhance the extent of arrangements to promote community cohesion by providing opportunities that widen the breadth of pupils' experience and understanding of the diversity of belief and culture throughout the United Kingdom.
- 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 enjoy taking part in lessons. When activities are interesting, they become engrossed in their task, working responsibly on their own or in small groups, for example deriving benefit from pair-discussion. They, happily, discuss their learning, though not always as frankly as they should. Care over presentation improves as they get older so that both written and number work is legible and clearly set out.

Over the last three years, attainment at the end of Year 6 has fluctuated. Nevertheless, taking their starting points into consideration, most pupils do as well as expected in both English and mathematics and progress is satisfactory overall. A small majority make good progress in reading, a larger majority do well in writing, although only a minority make good progress in mathematics. Boys do less well than girls in mathematics. Expert support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and, for some, outstanding progress. Given this pattern of progress and broadly average attainment, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils feel safe in school and act sensibly and considerately. They are very aware of the risks associated with water, use of the roads and irresponsible internet access. Pupils behave well in classrooms and the open parts of the school. Many enjoy involvement in the popular after-school activities, especially physical and sporting clubs. In a vibrant ExpoChef session, in partnership with the health service, pupils of all ages demonstrated good knowledge of foodstuffs and the importance of a balanced diet. Through an effective school council, the Young Leaders initiative to help younger schoolmates and participation in improving the grounds, pupils help make an admirable contribution to the school community. Facilitated through effective links with community organisations, pupils make a good contribution to local environmental projects. Pupils' charitable work supports others less fortunate than themselves. Their well-developed social but average basic skills and average attendance equip them sufficiently well for future life.

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	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	2
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?

Teaching is not of a uniformly good quality throughout the school. An effective combination of detailed planning, clear learning intentions, interesting activities and lively questioning is typical of the better teaching in the school. Adroit questioning evokes enthusiastic responses and every opportunity is taken to reinforce understanding. In such lessons, pupils take pride in their work. On occasions, however, attention wanders and progress slows, such as when pupils sit so that they cannot see the whiteboard properly; are not sufficiently involved in discussion; are not supported quickly enough when, clearly, they struggle; or when their main task is too theoretical to help them to undertake it successfully. Teachers follow a common approach to marking pupils' work and give pupils clear and pertinent points to improve their written work. Pointers for improvement in mathematics are less clearly based on an analysis of difficulties and so are less effective.

Strengths in the curriculum lie in the way themes, such as in history, geography and science, link effectively to promote progress in literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology. New approaches to writing successfully encourage boys and have improved all pupils' progress and attainment. Adaptations support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and foster their good progress. Partnerships with local artists, the church, community agencies, residential centres and the neighbouring specialist secondary school, greatly, expand pupils' cultural and sporting awareness. Very strong links fostered with European schools develop an understanding of life in other countries. At present, however, pupils have too few opportunities to broaden their understanding of the diversity of life in modern day

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Britain.

Adept management of the behavioural difficulties of some pupils, very effectively, ensures an atmosphere of calm and allows learning to continue in assemblies and lessons. Skilful, coordinated approaches by teachers and assistants and a close eye kept on their development, together effectively, support pupils at risk of underachievement and help to ensure that they make good progress. A strong partnership with the local secondary school and good arrangements that begin with younger pupils, successfully, prepare the pupils for moving on to the next stage in their education. Sound procedures, in cooperation with parents and carers and the local authority, have enabled the school to improve attendance and, substantially, reduce persistent absenteeism.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff work together as a coherent team and are committed to improving pupils' progress and, in turn, to raising standards. Although school leaders are determined to make teaching more effective throughout, its quality, at present, is inconsistent. Initiatives to raise writing standards have borne fruit over the past two years and the school is doing the groundwork to improve mathematics. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively and is careful to prevent discrimination of any kind, although a few boys do not do as well as they could in mathematics. Procedures for reviewing the school's work lead to an accurate evaluation with appropriate priorities set for improvement. The school has two plans for improvement and, because criteria for success are often vaguely stated, the process is not sufficiently helpful for staff and the governing body to measure success. Although well aware of the school's work, the governing body is over-reliant upon the headteacher's and local authority's reports for information. They know their next steps are to become more involved at first-hand, to enhance their role in school self-evaluation. The school reaches out to parents and carers through bulletins, reports and meetings. Parents and carers, particularly, favour the arrangements for joint discussions between teacher, parent or carer and child to review progress and outcomes. Effective partnerships with support agencies, local services, the church and community organisations enhance the quality of education. Following a thorough analysis, the governing body has assured a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, although plans to widen pupils' awareness of life in the United Kingdom are yet to be implemented. The governing body is diligent in ensuring that all measures for

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safeguarding the welfare of pupils are in place and meet current guidelines.

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	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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Few children join the Reception Year with Nursery experience and, for many, their skills levels and abilities are below those expected for their age in all areas of learning when they join the school. Most leave the Reception class having made satisfactory progress. Last year, a large minority had below-average levels of understanding in all areas of learning and their mathematical development was weakest. Following staff changes, the picture is improved this year, although mathematical development continues to be the weakest aspect. Children make best progress in their personal and social development. Children settle quickly, are involved and well behaved and play and learn well together. They form good relationships with other children and adults and, in turn, know who to ask for help if they have any concerns.

Although they were out of use for building work during the inspection, records show very effective use being made of the outdoor facilities this year. The indoor spaces provide a supportive environment in which children feel safe and develop confidence. A good balance of well-arranged activities in all areas of learning stimulates the children's imagination and enjoyment. Of particular note is how teachers consolidate children's learning at every turn, for example when an opportunity to see a moth emerging from its chrysalis, truly, evoked awe and wonder. Children are seen to learn in a carefully managed way that blends very effective, directed teaching with activities that they choose for themselves.

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Now that stability has been re-established within the early years team, provision is well led and managed. All adults work and plan effectively together as a coherent team and provision is now beginning to foster good learning and progress among children. Well-thought-through and diligently carried-out assessment procedures record children's progress and enable a good match of activities and expectations to suit children's particular needs. Rightly, staff give priority to ensuring that children will make good progress as they move through the Reception Year and then on into Year 1. Good, productive relationships, struck with parents and carers before children enter the Reception Year, lead parents and carers to express a high degree of satisfaction and feel assured about the school's good welfare arrangements for their children.

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires were very supportive. They were particularly pleased that their children enjoy school, with the way the school ensures that their children are safe and with arrangements to prepare their children for the future. Of the few who wrote comments, some were very positive and a few voiced worries reflected in the table of responses. Some parents' and carer's responses reflect concerns about their children's progress. The inspector agrees, finding that pupils make good progress in writing but that more could make good progress in mathematics. Some parents and carers are concerned about misbehaviour. The inspectors found that the school, skilfully, manages the difficult behaviour of some pupils and takes care to ensure that it does not affect the progress of other pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bearpark 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	64	8	29	0	0	1	4
The school keeps my child safe	16	57	12	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	50	11	39	3	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	43	12	43	4	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	43	10	36	5	18	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	36	12	43	6	21	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	39	15	54	2	7	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	43	14	50	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	32	16	57	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	21	14	50	7	25	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	29	14	50	5	18	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	10	36	14	50	3	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	54	11	39	2	7	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



7 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bearpark Primary School, Durham, DH7 7AU

I enjoyed my visit to inspect your school this week. Thank you for helping me when I came to see you in lessons and assemblies. You were very polite and well behaved. I did enjoy talking with some of you. I was delighted to see how much you like to take part in lessons and activities, such as the ExpoChef session that you clearly enjoyed. I was pleased to see how you contribute to school life, for example, as school councillors and by acting as Young Leaders. Your headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. All the adults in the school look after you very well and make arrangements to keep you safe. I saw that results of the tests you all have to take in Year 6 improved last year in English and mathematics and were average. Mathematics results are not quite as good this year. The structured approach you follow in writing is helping you but you do not make as much progress as you should in mathematics. I have asked the school to help more of you to do as well as possible, to lift your results in both English and, especially, mathematics in future. When I looked at your books, I liked the way your teachers let you know how well you are doing and I have asked them always to give you clear pointers to help you improve the standard of your work.

I was very pleased when you told me about your links with schools in other countries and to see your work on display. To widen your knowledge further, I have also asked your school to help you to find out about the variety of beliefs and cultures of the people from many backgrounds who now live in Britain.

You have many opportunities at Bearpark Primary School to learn about life and prepare for the future. Some of you will soon be joining a secondary school. I hope that you all do very well.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector

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