

# Bishop Middleham CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114258
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338325
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lesley Clark

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nigel Daines
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Armstrong
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Front Street Bishop Middleham Ferryhill DL17 9AL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. One looked specifically at safeguarding and pupils' welfare. The lead inspector visited seven lessons; held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the chair and vice-chair of governors; and met individual parents and governors on request. The inspector observed the school's work, and a selection of the school's documentation such as the school's development plan, procedures for safeguarding pupils and a range of policies. The inspector looked at pupils' work in the classroom and the systems the school uses for assessing their achievements and checking their progress. The inspector also looked at how the school works with parents and outside agencies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and analysed questionnaire responses from parents and carers and from pupils.

- whether the school has the capacity to improve given the current leadership and management arrangements and staffing difficulties
- how well pupils are taught, especially the most able pupils in Key Stage 1
- whether the Early Years Foundation Stage provision enables children to learn independently and through discovery, especially outdoors
- how effectively the school communicates with parents
- whether pupils have a sufficient say in what goes on at school and in taking charge of their own learning

## Information about the school

This is a small village school in a rural area near Ferryhill in County Durham. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils are White British. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. A smaller than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs. The breakfast club was inspected as it is run by the governing body. The school has experienced significant staffing difficulties. The local authority supports the school. The school is led and managed by an associate headteacher for two days a week and an acting headteacher for three days a week. The school has an Activemark and an Eco-Bronze Award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

This school gives pupils a satisfactory education. Pupils behave well, their attendance is above average and they are very willing to learn. However, standards in writing and mathematics are not as high as they should be and pupils do not make consistently good progress, especially in Key Stage 1. This is because teachers do not use assessment effectively to set high enough expectations and pupils are unsure what they need to do to improve their work. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, children do not have enough opportunities to take a lead in their own learning and learn through discovery and solving problems and so their progress slows. The local authority took swift action at a very early stage to minimise the impact of ongoing long-term staff absences. As a result, teaching quality across the school is satisfactory with some areas of excellence. Although there is an element of underachievement, particularly by the most able pupils, standards overall have not declined and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Pupils are happy and self-assured, acknowledging, 'It isn't the best of schools but it's OK.' Strong leadership by the associate headteacher and acting headteacher coupled with sharply accurate self-evaluation are driving improvements at a fast rate. This gives the school a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The contribution made by the governing body is inadequate because governors are not working sufficiently well as a team to give consistent challenge and support so as to tackle weaknesses decisively.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors work productively as a team with a common purpose so they can challenge and support the school effectively.
- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics and accelerate progress, especially in Key Stage 1 by:
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment data to plan suitably challenging work for different ability groups
  - raising teachers' expectations, particularly of the most able pupils
  - involving pupils in assessing their own learning so they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Accelerate the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring that children spend more of their time leading their own learning
  - providing interesting, exciting and challenging activities which require children to think and solve problems

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- ensuring that adults make precise observations of what children say and do and use the information to plan the next steps in each child's learning.
- 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 arrive punctually. They are pleased to see their friends and are ready to work. They enjoy learning and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 1 lose no time at all in busying themselves because there are lots of interesting things for them to do in between working in small groups with the teacher. They learn to write a sentence, with help, under photographs of themselves as babies and enjoy listening to story tapes, following the words in books. After an interrupted beginning to the school year, Year 2 pupils have settled and are keen to learn. Pupils' current work shows that they are capable of reaching above average standards but they still have a long way to go to catch up on basic skills in writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently below average for the past three years.

Standards at the end of Year 6 vary considerably but balance out at broadly average over a three-year period. The proportion reaching the higher levels has dwindled, especially in writing and mathematics. Pupils' writing is not as accurate as it should be. Poor presentation and handwriting as well as elementary spelling errors and erratic paragraphing spoil some otherwise imaginative work. Pupils are fast learners and their work improves dramatically when teachers expect more of them. Standards in mathematics are variable because pupils have some gaps in their knowledge. This is why the most able pupils sometimes flounder. Pupils read well and with evident enjoyment. They talk knowledgeably about books they have read and say they would 'like lots more different books to choose from' in school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because teaching assistants take pains to help them learn effectively.

Pupils know what they need to do to stay healthy and they enjoy physical activity, making full use of the extensive play and climbing facilities outside. The breakfast club makes a good contribution to their awareness of health and hygiene. Pupils feel very safe and behave thoughtfully and responsibly. They look after each other very well and spontaneously congratulate friends when they make a good contribution in lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated their maturity when asked to assess how well they were working as a group, deciding that it was 'important to listen to each other as it speeds up your work'. These qualities prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education. The school council does not meet regularly enough and so pupils do not always have a sufficient say in what goes on at their school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but their cultural awareness is less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching quality varies from barely satisfactory to outstanding. Where it is most successful, teachers engage pupils fully in their learning, pupils understand exactly what is expected of them and the work matches their capabilities. The pace of learning is fast and pupils are so absorbed in what they are doing they do not notice that it is lunchtime. For example, in the Year 5/6 class pupils worked eagerly on their playscripts and the more they did the more they realised they needed to know so as to set the playscripts out properly. The most able wrestled with the additional challenge of being editors and directors. In less successful lessons, teachers underestimate pupils' capabilities and so they set work that is too easy for the most able in particular. The pace of learning slows because questioning does not extend pupils' thinking. The main weaknesses stem from teachers not involving pupils sufficiently well and so pupils are unclear about how well they are doing and have little opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It has strengths in the current Year 1 where a mix of the Year 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum meets the needs of this particular group of pupils. The design, range and depth of the curriculum from the pupils' experience, though, has shortcomings. This is because staff are at an early stage of linking subjects creatively. Where this is happening, pupils' engagement soars. The school offers a limited range of extra-curricular activities. The all-weather

<sup>1</sup> 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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pitch is underused and pupils have very few opportunities to play competitive sports. Pupils are given satisfactory advice and guidance. Recent tightening up of systems such as the arrangements for before school, for assemblies and lunchtimes have had an immediate impact on pupils' well-being because pupils know exactly what is expected of them. As a result, they have grown in confidence and cheerfully select the music for assembly, for example, without guidance. Pupils are well looked after and there are satisfactory links with outside agencies. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have suitable individual education plans. These are currently being revised so as to involve parents more closely.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The leadership and management are rightly focused on improving areas of weakness in outcomes, teaching and other provisions. The local authority involvement has accelerated this process effectively. Improvement is rapid as a result of stringent evaluation, scrupulous checking of all aspects of the school's work, sharp deadlines and putting clear workable systems into place. The leadership of teaching and learning is particularly good, resulting in good-quality learning experiences in most classes. Although it is too soon to measure the full extent of its effectiveness in terms of pupils' achievement, it has clearly enhanced pupils' enjoyment in learning.

The school has accurate information about the performance of different groups of pupils to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities. The leadership team reviewed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This led to reducing the number of pupils with identified needs and giving well-targeted support to the less able pupils. Again, it is too soon to see the full impact but the signs are hopeful. All safeguarding requirements are met and procedures fully meet government requirements. Those which have been updated recently are exemplary, especially in relation to child protection and security. All staff are suitably trained. Although governors are fully aware of the challenges the school faces, they do not pull together. They do not have clear systems for seeking the views of staff, parents and pupils or mechanisms for acting on these. This limits their capacity to take part in shaping the direction and work of the school and their ability to hold the school to account for the way it tackles weaknesses. The school has a comprehensive three-year plan, already underway, to improve its community cohesion, especially its links with the local community and to

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re-establish good working relationships with a small minority of parents. Close links with the church contribute successfully to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well when they first start in Reception and quickly adapt to the daily routines. This is because they are well cared for and key workers establish good relationships with their group of children. From broadly average starting points children make satisfactory progress. The majority reach the level expected at the start of Year 1 though this does vary from year to year depending on children's ability and readiness to learn. The provision is well organised but too much time is spent in groups and tidying up at the start and end of each session. This reduces the time for child-led learning. There are lots of things for children to do and lots of space, especially outside, to encourage vigorous physical activity. The children are good at inventing their own imaginative games and the 'pet shop' and the 'den' are used extensively. Relatively few activities, however, challenge children to think or to solve problems and so they do not always use time as productively as they should. For example, the water trays with detachable open pipes are great fun but with more thoughtful planning would offer much more challenge for budding engineers to set up and control water flow. The use of assessment is developing but observations are not sharp enough to help teachers pinpoint exactly what individual children need to do next to push their learning on. Parents are given good information to help them support their children's learning.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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**

Most parents and carers are pleased with the education their children receive and believe it is a lovely school with good potential. A small minority of parents and carers raised understandable concerns about the many different teachers their children had last year and the way this slowed the children's progress. They feel that they have not been kept sufficiently well informed about what is going on. This is not the case now. The acting and associate headteachers are working hard to improve communication with parents and carers by visible presence before school, responding quickly to concerns and improving the quality of information. They are well aware of the period of turbulence with long-term staff absences and are addressing these in a highly professional way. Many letters have been sent home to update parents and carers on what is happening, including changes to the organisation of the school day and protocols for parents and carers to contact school so they can voice their concerns without further disruption to pupils' learning. Most parents and carers agree that, 'The school offers many opportunities to discuss my child's progress and has a system whereby parents can make appointments with staff if required.'

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bishop Middleham CofE 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 inspector received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	43	39	54	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	47	37	51	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	16	40	57	16	23	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	23	27	39	18	26	5	7
The teaching is good at this school	17	24	33	46	14	20	4	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	23	28	40	19	27	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	35	45	63	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)	14	21	40	60	6	9	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	27	40	56	5	7	5	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	26	38	55	7	10	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	14	37	53	15	21	6	9
The school is led and managed effectively	12	17	23	33	19	27	14	20
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	23	34	49	16	23	1	1

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



Inspection of Bishop Middleham C of E Primary School, Ferryhill, DL17 9AL

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and seeing your lessons. I would like to say a special thank you to the children who spent time talking with me in the afternoon. I took your views into account when I wrote my report. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well and there are some things it needs to improve. Your school keeps you safe. You behave well and your attendance is above average. This gives you a good start because it means you are ready and willing to learn. Some of you were a bit fed up about all the staffing changes but you have continued learning throughout that difficult time. It has made a difference though to your writing which is a bit untidy and not as well organised as it should be. Some of you have a bit of catching up to do in mathematics too because you have some gaps in your knowledge. This is what I have asked your school to do to ensure that from now on your education gets better and better.

- Governors should work together as a team so they can help the school.
- Teachers should raise standards in writing and mathematics and help you to make faster progress, especially in Key Stage 1 by setting you work at the right level. I think teachers should expect more of those of you who find learning very easy and they should involve all of you in checking your work so you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve it.
- Lastly, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage need lots more exciting and interesting activities so they learn through working things out for themselves.

You can help by continuing to be as cheerful, friendly and willing as you already are. But you will have to work hard!

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