

Bedlington West End First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122176
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	354350
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Patterson
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Bushell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed 11 class teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and analysed 98 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The team also looked at development plans, the pupils' progress data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, school policies and procedures, scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner to discuss his reports.

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

- the current achievement, patterns of progress and attainment for all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those older, more able and talented
- the effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage and the rate of progress that children make
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in building the capacity to sustain improvement gains in achievement, accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards.

Information about the school

The school is above average in size. Nearly all the pupils are from a White British background with none learning English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is just below average. A below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although an average proportion have a statement of special educational need. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of three classes of Reception children. The West End Pre-School and Out of School Club private provision operate from a single building on the site and will be the subject of a separate inspection whose report will be available on the Ofsted website. The headteacher has been in post since April 2009 and the deputy headteacher since September 2009.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

West End is a good and improving school. It cares for its pupils really well. The slip in standards since the last inspection has been arrested and pupils' achievement and rate of progress are now rising steadily because of the effective strategies put in place by senior leaders. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support, recognise that children are kept safe and appreciate the good levels of enjoyment their children get from school life. One parent's comment, 'My son loves school and his class has become a second home,' sums up the view of many.

Excellent staff teamwork has created a very positive climate for learning that is particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils and their families. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure, enjoy their learning and achieve well in often lively, inspiring lessons. This is reflected in their regular pattern of attendance. By the end of Year 4, nearly all pupils exceed the expected levels for their age in reading and mathematics. Most exceed the expected level in writing but, despite improvements a few, mainly boys, do not attain as well. Overall, pupils' attainment when they finish Year 4 represents good progress from starting points that are broadly average for most children, with a small minority arriving with weak communication skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable also make good progress. Positive action has been taken to ensure that more able pupils achieve higher levels. Good teaching provides activities well matched to interests and makes certain there is plenty of effective support for all to succeed. Good use of assessment, especially in literacy, is helping to boost expectations and accelerate the rate of progress, although in some lessons the focus on achievement is not always sharp enough. The rich and imaginative curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of learning. It is particularly effective in nurturing confidence and individual talents. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and they take pride in their role in improving their school. They actively join local community activities, although first-hand experiences of the wider diverse world in which they live are limited.

Effective school self-evaluation procedures ensure that senior leaders share an accurate view of the school's main strengths and areas for continued improvement. They are well supported by a dynamic group of middle leaders. Although appropriate action has been taken to tackle underachievement, approaches to evaluating the impact of initiatives to further improve teaching and learning occasionally lack the rigour required to ensure more outstanding practice develops. Given the successful action to reverse the decline in standards and the strengthening of middle leadership, the school demonstrates a good capacity to secure further improvements.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - maintaining a constant focus on achievement in all lessons
 - ensuring that approaches designed to develop more outstanding teaching have the desired effect.
- Raise achievement and accelerate the rate of progress in writing by:
 - raising the expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve, especially boys
 - extending the opportunities for active learning to heighten enjoyment.
- Broaden the range of first-hand experiences to develop the pupils' awareness of the diversity of other beliefs and cultures nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all ages and backgrounds achieve well and enjoy their learning. When activities are inspiring a 'buzz' goes around the classroom and probing, open-ended questions challenge and stretch pupils' thinking. They willingly share experiences and ideas. In lessons when activities are less imaginative, pupils become passive, are less well motivated and the pace of learning slows. Their enthusiasm to learn can be seen in their good behaviour which helps lessons flow smoothly ensuring that lesson pace is rarely interrupted. Pupils work hard at their tasks and confidently ask for help and support if they need it. Positive attitudes help pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress, despite their sometimes lower than average starting points. The creative curriculum enables pupils to develop their skills, for example imagining being Alan Shearer scoring the winning goal, in their imaginative writing.

In recent years, standards at the end of Year 2 have slipped, especially in writing and mathematics. This decline has been successfully reversed with pupils of all abilities making good gains in their reading, writing and mathematics. Despite these overall improvements, boys' writing remains a relative weakness. More pupils are on course to reach higher levels as standards rise. In Year 4, a very similar picture is emerging where the majority of pupils are expected to reach above average levels for their age in English and mathematics. This is confirmed by inspection evidence.

Pupils confidently say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. They value the effective way in which staff deal with any problems or concerns. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the benefits of a balanced diet and activities that help them keep fit. They take responsibility in their stride acting as play leaders and games mentors during social times. Pupils make a very good contribution to the local community such as singing at events and donating harvest gifts. Their good spiritual, moral, and social development is evident in the constructive and helpful relationships they have with each other and the respect they show their staff.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good and sometimes inspiring teaching help pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. Most lessons are interesting and create fun activities which capture their interests. Effective questioning challenges pupils' thinking and gives them the confidence to share their ideas, for example exchanging thoughts to discover if shadows changed shape during the day. In the best lessons there are plenty of opportunities for hands-on practical learning which pupils thoroughly enjoy. Where marking is best, pupils understand the next steps needed to improve their work and, consequently, their rate of progress accelerates. Progress in lessons occasionally slows when pupils are not sufficiently motivated to learn actively, think independently and apply their skills.

The curriculum is brought alive well by the creative links that are made between subjects, for example writing about a fantasy castle in literacy and then creating an imaginative castle scene on the computer. There is a good match to individual needs and interests. Good opportunities are provided to practise literacy and numeracy skills, although there is scope for even greater demands made of pupils to improve writing skill further. Very good use is made of staff talents and skills such as in the teaching of

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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music. Well-targeted individual teaching and support ensure equally good progress is made by different groups of pupils.

The school's key strength lies in the effective pastoral care it provides to strengthen pupils' sense of security and confidence to succeed. Staff use their detailed knowledge of pupils and their families to provide successful personalised learning. For example, very good quality nurture provision for potentially vulnerable pupils, in close collaboration with specialist family support agencies, raises aspirations and helps support a more settled pattern of attendance. Pupils display a strong sense of 'family' in their daily school life. Arrangements to support the transition to middle school are effective and appreciated by pupils and parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear direction for improvement built on high quality care and support as the basis for good learning. She is well supported by a self-motivated and talented group of middle leaders who are quickly developing the analytical skills necessary to sustain improvements. Good relationships with the local community, support and help agencies and local authority specialist teachers are adding to the drive to continue to raise achievement. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to firmly embed systems to check and analyse the impact of actions taken to ensure that more teaching becomes outstanding.

Governors give good support and provide good challenge through their regular monitoring practice. Safeguarding requirements are met with good procedures in place to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and adults. Relationships with parents and carers are good and the school does a great deal to involve them in their children's learning. Community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted with good local community links, including 'hard to reach' families, but experiences of diverse communities both nationally and globally are underdeveloped. The calm, happy and friendly atmosphere reflects the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for its pupils so that all can play a full part in what the school has to offer.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children's skill and experience on entry to Nursery are broadly at the level expected for their age. Some have weaknesses which are apparent in their communication skills. Children settle confidently in the secure, nurturing environment and make really good progress developing their personal skills and independence. They are very quickly able to direct their own learning. By the end of Reception, nearly all have made good progress working towards the goals expected for their age. Excellent progress is made in their social and emotional development. Children behave really well and enjoy the many interesting activities that are provided. Despite the shortcomings of an older building which prevents 'free-flow' outside, they are encouraged to instigate their own learning and are well supported by staff. Good teaching and effective use of assessment information ensure a broad range of appropriate learning activities. Adults follow learning, skilfully asking questions to prompt the next steps in learning. Good opportunities are provided so that children can explore and investigate, for example using a magnifying glass to identify mini-beasts under tree bark. Excellent teamwork enables a good balance between adult led and those activities which children can choose for themselves to be maintained. Welfare requirements exceed those required with a strong emphasis on personal hygiene.

There are positive links with parents and carers who are kept well informed of their children's progress through their 'learning journals', open events and informal contact with staff. Leadership and management are good. Key worker responsibilities are firmly embedded making sure that all staff play a part personalising learning to ensure a consistent pattern of good progress and achievement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About one half of parents and carers returned the questionnaire outlining their views of the school. The overwhelming majority of those were positive in their views about all aspects of its work and nearly all felt that their children are safe and happy in school. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. Parents and carers might find it helpful to know that in relation to the very few concerns received, inspectors found that these issues were being capably addressed and managed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bedlington West End First 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 281 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	61	39	36	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	73	68	33	31	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	54	47	44	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	59	41	38	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	66	34	32	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	53	48	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	45	50	47	6	6	1	1
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)	53	50	46	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	60	37	35	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	50	45	42	6	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	41	50	47	7	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	53	50	43	40	6	6	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	62	37	35	2	2	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.



10 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bedlington West End First School, Bedlington, NE22 6EB

I want to thank you all for the very friendly welcome that you gave to me and my colleagues during your school's inspection and your willingness to help us. We really enjoyed our time with you.

We were impressed by your good behaviour, both in classrooms and in the playground. West End is a good and improving school and your staff take really good care of you. You obviously feel very safe because of this. You certainly understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle and keep fit. Many of you told us that your teachers make your learning enjoyable and interesting. You make good progress in your work and clearly enjoy your lessons, especially when subjects are linked together in a 'fun way'. Good use is made of the many links the school has with the local community, the help and support agencies, other schools and your parents.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to look at ways of adding to the quality of your learning to improve your work even more. We feel that boys' writing could also be improved. We have asked school staff to check very closely how well new ideas are being taught. This will make your work even more challenging and will help you to make even faster progress. We also think that it is important that you are given more first-hand experiences of the range of beliefs and cultures that exist in the world around you.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you possibly can.

Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope the school will continue to improve.

We wish you the best of luck for your future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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