



Bowes Hutchinson's C of E (Aided) School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114237
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279342
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Brian Blake HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bowes
School category	Voluntary aided		Barnard Castle
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		County Durham, DL12 9LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01833 628291
Number on roll	46	Fax number	01833 628487
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mike Bettison
Date of previous inspection	1 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Susan Griffiths

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors visiting the school for one day. The school's accurate self-evaluation was used extensively before the visit to formulate key lines of enquiry that were discussed with the headteacher and chair of the governing body. Time was also used to scrutinise key documents and selected school policies, observe lessons and talk with children about their work. A meeting was held with representatives of the school council to find out 'what it is like to be a pupil at Bowes Hutchinson C of E (Aided) School?'

Description of the school

Bowes Hutchinson is a very small rural primary school with one Foundation/Key Stage 1 class, and two Key Stage 2 classes that combine Years 3/4 and 5/6 respectively. The school's reputation for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has partly changed the nature of its roll in recent years, and now includes around one-quarter of its pupils from outside the immediate catchment area, many of whom have some form of special educational need. There are very few minority ethnic pupils, and very few who receive free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bowes Hutchinson provides an outstanding quality of education. The majority of children start at the school with standards that are marginally below those that are typical of children starting in the Reception year. The progress pupils make during Key Stage 1 is excellent, with standards reaching above the national expectations at the end of Year 2. This very good rate of progress is maintained throughout Key Stage 2, so that by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards are significantly above the national expectations in mathematics and science, and in line with those seen nationally in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress throughout their time at the school.

This is a well-run school, with very effective leadership and good quality teaching. The headteacher knows the school very well, as shown in the school's very accurate self-evaluation. She works very well with all staff, and applies a thorough and common sense approach to management, which brings about a high level of respect from the parents who support all that the school does. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the school, especially the work of the staff. As one parent so aptly said, 'We cannot praise Bowes and the staff highly enough for the help they give us. Apart from the good ethos and atmosphere of the school, they have helped our son's special needs and implemented a detailed programme to meet these needs. There is constant, helpful communication between home and school. Bowes is a very special school'.

Bowes is also a very special school for the pupils. They have high self-esteem, and show confidence in talking to peers and the adults whom they come into contact with, in and out of lessons. These traits have not developed by accident, but owe a great deal to the work of teachers. Teaching is consistently good, and planning thorough and well-matched to the needs of pupils in the mixed-aged classes within the school. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn, and ensure that in lessons productive outcomes result from targeted learning objectives. Occasionally, however, the lessons are better than the written word in identifying what learning should take place, and what skills, knowledge and understanding need to be developed to achieve these stated ends; this is an area where the school could develop further. Teachers show great sensitivity to all pupils in lessons, gently encouraging their involvement in a range of learning activities. Pupils respond well to this approach, and in all lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' willingness to discuss and work in pairs and larger groups was exemplary. The attitudes of both teachers and pupils, and the levels of respect they show towards each other, make lessons interesting and very enjoyable. As one pupil said, 'The school is really good because you get to do subjects you really like. And, you get to share your opinions with everyone else'. Pupils feel valued, and appreciate that their good quality work is recognised by teachers. As another pupil said, 'There is not one person who doesn't have something on the wall - classrooms are really bright and colourful'.

Pupils have pride in the school, which is fully justified. Pupils feel safe, and show a high level of social awareness of others, which emanates from the high quality of care,

guidance and support they receive throughout their time at the school, and also from the very good range of enrichment activities that all pupils have access to. Both these aspects are providing pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding and appreciation of the wider world outside of school, which is particularly important given that the majority live in relatively rural isolation.

Pupils are helped to develop their personal well-being very effectively. They engage in a number of activities that help them stay healthy and safe. The take up of 'healthy food options' in the canteen is one example of the school's success in enabling pupils to be health conscious, and the range of extra-curricular activities also provide many opportunities for pupils to be active. The school takes its care role very seriously, and all necessary checks are made to protect the pupils from harm. This gives the pupils confidence in all that they do when at school.

Bowes Hutchinson School has a clear sense of community, and makes strenuous efforts to engage parents and the local population in all that it does to promote the learning of its pupils. The 'open access' policy is a reality, and the school is seen as an important contributor to the general well-being of the community served by the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Overall standards are good at both Key Stages 1 and 2, and the progress that pupils make during their time at the school outstanding. Although pupils start at the school marginally below the standards expected, they make excellent progress so that by the time they reach the end of Year 6, they achieve significantly higher standards in mathematics and science, and marginally but not significantly higher standards in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, and characterised by the confident, well-rounded nature of all that the pupils do in and around the school. Pupils feel safe from harm. They enjoy attending school, and all speak eloquently about how much they enjoy their lessons and how they appreciate all that their teachers are doing to make learning fun. As one young pupil said, 'school is fun - you get to do nice things'. The school is sensitively developing pupils' awareness of eating healthily and being active by giving a high priority to good quality food options for lunch, and a range of curricular and extra-curricular sporting activities. The school council feels empowered to discuss and make decisions that influence some aspects of school life: for example, the reward systems, the allocation of specific year group dining tables at lunch, and the set-up of the very impressive 'secret garden' in the school grounds, that has been developed and added to by the children over the past six years.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is of a good standard. Teachers know their pupils well, and show considerable expertise in managing mixed-aged pupils in single classes. Work is appropriately planned, and teachers use effective classroom management and organisation skills to ensure that learning is brisk and that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress. Pupils appreciate fully the efforts of their teachers and, as one Year 6 pupil said, 'lessons are exciting, and teachers try to make every day different by moving around. It makes learning better when teachers specialise'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum and other activities are outstanding. Teachers deliver a well-balanced and well-constructed curriculum which meets the varying needs of all pupils. An impressive range of enrichment activities, in and out of school, add to pupils' learning experiences, and are clearly helping to make an impact on the very good rate of progress seen within the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Partly because of its size, pupils are well-known to all adults working in the school. However, this alone does not account for the high level of confidence that the pupils have in the staff. Clear and well-written guidance is reflected in actual practice seen in lessons and around the school. Teachers and other adults relate very well to the pupils, who reciprocate by showing very high standards of behaviour in lessons. This gives a really high 'feel-good' factor to parents and their children. As one parent said, '... both my children are extremely happy at school and are flourishing in the warm, friendly teaching atmosphere that the school has'. This view is reinforced by a number of other parents, one of whom said: 'There is a good, open-access policy for parents to have contact with staff-from the school cook, caretaker, after-school club activity leaders and the teaching staff. I am very happy'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding, and serve to direct the school to well-focused actions and priorities for future improvement. The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, knows very well the strengths and areas for future development. Leadership is not complacent, even with its very good national test

results, and continuous efforts are being made to tackle areas where further improvements can be made; for example in writing and problem solving in mathematics. There is a thorough approach to quality assuring teaching throughout the school, for example by monitoring lessons, but there are some occasions when recorded evaluations are too general rather than specific, in targeting key areas for improvement. However, this does not detract from the overall high quality of leadership appreciated by parents. As one parent said 'As a parent I am delighted with the school. The headteacher is an exceptional person with the right blend of authority, compassion and sense of humour. She always has time for you, as do other members of staff. She is a great leader. There is a general air of positivity and fun about the school. I am so glad that schools like Bowes exist'.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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To the pupils of:

Bowes Hutchinson's C of E (Aided) School

Bowes

Barnard Castle

County Durham

DL12 9LG

28 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for providing me with such an enjoyable day when I recently visited your school.

I was very impressed with everything that I saw during my visit, especially the way you worked in lessons and how you behaved throughout the day - very well done to you all. You clearly enjoy being at school, and this shows in the obvious pride that you have when talking about all the different things you do, and all that you achieve in school. The standards that you reach are good, and the progress that you all make in your learning, from Foundation Stage all the way through to Year 6, is excellent.

All the staff at the school work hard to ensure that you are safe, that you eat healthily and have opportunities to be physically active; they care for you very well. Even though your school achieves so much, the adults in the school are working to make it even better. You can help your teachers to achieve this by continuing to work hard and by taking every opportunity to involve yourselves in the range of activities provided for you, in and out of your lessons.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector