

# Finchale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130312
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	293624
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Shepherd

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	192
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Whittaker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sandra Whitton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Canterbury Road Newton Hall Durham County Durham DH1 5XT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3865187
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 3865187

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area of private housing. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and many of these pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average and there are more pupils with statements of special educational needs than usual in primary schools. Children join the Reception class from 11 different nurseries. Standards on entry are broadly average. There have been several changes of headteacher since the previous inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. Standards are good and achievement satisfactory overall. Children make a good start in Reception due to the good quality teaching and the well balanced curriculum. They achieve well and by the end of Reception, standards are above the expected level. Achievement slows from good to satisfactory in English through the rest of the school and by the time pupils leave, standards are above average. In mathematics and science, progress is good and standards are well above average by the time pupils leave the school. The variations between achievements in the different subjects are due to the school's priorities in developing their mathematics provision and reorganising the science curriculum into longer blocks of time. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well targeted support and they make good progress. Teachers make sure that pupils with English as an additional language understand what to do and these pupils achieve well.

Pupils benefit from the school's sensitive care, support and guidance and their personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are above average. They understand what they need to do to keep safe and healthy and show this in practical ways, such as joining in the different sports clubs and choosing healthy foods at lunchtimes. Pupils are keen to take responsibility for each other and for special tasks and enjoy taking the initiative. These opportunities and the systematic development of basic skills prepare them well for their future lives. The work of the school council develops citizenship skills well. Pupils value the opportunities to contribute to the community either in formal events such as singing in a local supermarket or in raising funds for charities. Pupils who act as mediators have a good understanding of how to carry out their roles and this helps to promote the good levels of behaviour, which are evident at playtimes, around the school and in lessons.

The curriculum is of a good quality. The organisation of some subjects in blocks of time works well and is providing interesting opportunities to extend literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The school works well to enrich the curriculum with different clubs and visits out of school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The good practice seen in some lessons is not used consistently across the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision of how she wants the school to develop and has good skills of self-evaluation and monitoring. These skills are not used as effectively by other leaders and managers. The school has had a lack of continuity in leadership over time. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. There is good capacity for future improvement, with the headteacher, staff and governors all keen to increase pupils' achievement and ensure consistently good provision through the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English.
- Ensure that aspects of good teaching and learning practice are shared consistently through the school.
- Extend monitoring and self-evaluation strategies.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are good. Children enter the school with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress in Reception due to the good quality teaching and well-balanced curriculum. By the end of Reception, standards are above the expected level.

Through the rest of the school, progress in English is satisfactory and good in mathematics and science. The national assessments show that standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average but fluctuate over time. This is due to the differences in the range of ability of pupils in each year group. Writing standards are consistently higher than reading. The same variation in standards is evident in Year 6 over time. The inspection confirms the results of the national tests that show achievement in the junior classes to be satisfactory in English, with above average standards. The school has made a priority of improving provision and increasing progress in mathematics and science. It has been successful. Achievement is good in these subjects and by Year 6 standards are well above average. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The school has introduced rigorous tracking systems to ensure that progress becomes more consistent across different subjects, but it is too early for these strategies to have had an impact.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to the well focused support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. Teachers ensure that they understand what they are expected to do in lessons.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Children build a very good foundation to this development in Reception. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils benefit from the school's different links with other countries. They enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are above average. The school council takes its work very seriously and is proud of the improvements that it has made, particularly the purchase and organisation of apparatus for playtimes. Pupils relish the opportunities to take responsibility around the school and enjoy carrying out their tasks efficiently. The work of the mediators is very effective. These pupils have a sophisticated understanding of how to support others when there has been a disagreement. These personal skills, combined with the systematic development of basic skills, prepare pupils well for their future lives. Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe. They are very clear about the importance of moving around the buildings with consideration for others and have a very good understanding about dangers, such as the railway line running past the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of the importance of being healthy, which is reflected in its Healthy School's Award. Pupils are clear about what constitutes a healthy diet. They understand about the need to take regular exercise, shown by the good levels of attendance at the different sports clubs. Pupils contribute well to the community, enjoying occasions such as singing in a local supermarket or raising funds for local charities.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Teachers work well with the teaching assistants and this ensures that pupils receive effective support for their learning during group work. This partnership is particularly effective for helping pupils with behavioural disabilities to concentrate on their learning. In whole-class sessions teachers miss opportunities for pupils to play an active part in discussions and they do not vary the challenge in their questions well enough to match different pupils' learning needs. The quality of some aspects of teaching and learning is too inconsistent through the school. In the best teaching, there is a brisk pace, tasks are well matched to different learning needs and good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop skills in assessing their own learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils confidently analysed their own writing using a range of different criteria. In weaker teaching, the pace is inconsistent; there is not enough variety in tasks to match different learning needs and pupils are unclear about how well they are learning, particularly in English. Teaching and learning in Reception are good. The teaching team in this age group works very well together. They assess children's learning skilfully and use this information effectively to plan future teaching.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good quality. The headteacher's initiative to deliver some subjects in longer blocks of time is working very well. This organisation provides pupils with time to cover different topics in depth, whilst developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively. The curriculum for personal development is of good quality. There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of personal issues systematically, such as learning about the dangers of smoking and alcohol. The use of visits out of school and visitors into school enriches the curriculum well. The Reception curriculum is based carefully on children's needs and interests and ensures systematic progress across all the areas of learning. There is a good balance between work with staff and independent learning. The curriculum in Year 1 does not include enough independent learning to ensure a smooth transition from the well balanced Reception organisation. The school provides a good variety of clubs, with external specialists used well to extend this provision. Pupils value these additional opportunities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. Staff know the pupils well and share the expertise of the long term members of staff's knowledge of families to support individuals sensitively. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and that they can raise personal issues with staff in the confidence that they will be addressed. The great majority of parents appreciate this aspect of the school's work. Safeguarding systems are in place. Personal guidance is good. The new tracking systems have not been in place long enough to ensure that academic guidance is consistently good through the school. Some pupils, particularly Year 6 pupils, are very clear about what they need to do to improve although other pupils are less sure. The school works well with outside agencies to provide additional support. This is particularly evident in the

organisation of the programme for personal development, where individual and groups receive targeted support. This promotes the confidence of vulnerable pupils well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how she wants to take the school forward. She has introduced a good range of initiatives to extend the work of the school. Some of these initiatives have already had an impact in raising standards. The reorganisation of the curriculum has improved performance in several subjects as well as reinforcing basic skills such as numeracy. Other initiatives, like the clearly organised tracking systems have not yet had time to help produce consistently good achievement across different subjects. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors have a commitment to extend the scope of their work through the means of a recently completed action plan. The headteacher monitors the work of the school well and has good skills of self-evaluation. These skills are not securely in place across other levels of leadership and management. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The number of changes of headteacher since the previous inspection has resulted in a lack of continuity and improvement since then has been satisfactory. The school has a good capacity to succeed in future because the current headteacher now knows the school well and is determined to make long term improvements and the governors and staff are keen to work with her.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Finchale Primary School, County Durham, DH1 5XT

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering our questions.

We were very impressed with how well you behave. You move around the school very sensibly, particularly up and down the steps between your buildings. We thought that you had a good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy and you attend lots of different clubs out of school. The mediators really understand how to help you if you have a disagreement, and your school council works hard to make your school a better place. We thought that the way you concentrated on the same subject for a full week in the afternoons is working really well and is helping you to get better at literacy and numeracy and computer technology. Your teachers work well with your teaching assistants to help you learn more quickly when you are in groups. We think that the adults in your school work hard together to help you if you have any worries. The children in Reception do really well at all the different activities in their classroom.

We have asked your teachers to help you to learn more quickly in English and to give you more time to talk when the whole class is working together. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that your work is always at the right level to help you learn better in all your lessons. We are sure that you will do your best to make sure that your school gets to be an even better place to learn.

Best wishes,

Maggi Shepherd and Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspectors