

King Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130946
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	315671
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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 on roll	
School	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Wicockson
Headteacher	Mrs D Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	High Grange Road Spennymoor County Durham DL16 6RA
Telephone number	01388 816078
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school situated in an area which is less socially and economically advantaged than most. Most pupils are of White British heritage with only a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average overall and in some year groups it is significantly high. The number of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time of entry is high. The school has recently been awarded the National Healthy Schools award. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was leading and managing the school in an acting capacity.

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 where pupils enjoy their education and develop good personal skills. Pupils behave well and relationships throughout the school community are good. Consequently, pupils feel safe and grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. For example, they take on responsibilities, such as school councillors and office monitors, and they help to raise funds for charities. Such experiences prepare them soundly for life in the wider world. The care pupils receive is good, with a variety of interventions to meet their needs. The good partnerships that the school has developed with other agencies help them to meet the needs of those pupils who are vulnerable or have difficulty with their learning.

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory. However, progress is inconsistent as pupils move through the school; as a result, standards remain below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Both the quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory and improving. These aspects have some significant strengths but weaknesses remain which account for the variations in pupils' progress. Teachers know and get on well with their pupils. They manage their classes well, and this is a major factor in the good behaviour that is evident. Recently adopted new approaches to teaching literacy are leading to improved progress in reading and writing; however, they are not yet fully embedded into daily lessons and this is slowing the rate of improvement. Progress in mathematics is variable between classes. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and acquire useful information about their progress. However, this information is not always used well resulting in work not always matching sufficiently to the range of abilities within each class. For some pupils, this results in a lack of challenge and for others a lack of support for their learning. Some pupils know and understand what they need to do to improve but others do not. These inconsistencies in providing pupils with academic guidance mean that overall care guidance and support are satisfactory, rather than good, despite the school's strong pastoral care.

The curriculum is well enriched by the many visits undertaken by pupils and visitors to the school. There is a good range of after-school clubs in which there is good participation by pupils. A strong emphasis on personal, social and health education enables pupils to make informed choices about their lifestyles and they learn to deal with social and moral issues. Pupils enjoy and respond well to 'themed weeks' which give real meaning to their learning across a range of subjects. There are, however, occasions where the curriculum provided lacks variety and pupils are not motivated to learn as well as they can.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. School leaders have a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have put in place a series of initiatives to secure improvements which demonstrate the school's sound capacity to improve. Evaluation of the success of these initiatives has so far concentrated on the consistency of their implementation rather than rigorously checking their impact on pupils' progress. This at times leads to an over optimistic view of how well pupils are doing. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school in setting a clear direction for future development but do not always hold the school sufficiently to account with regard to achievement and standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the school with a range of skills that are below what is typical for their age. Provision is satisfactory and by the end of the year children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. However, too many tasks are directed by adults with few opportunities for children to choose or develop their own ideas. This restricts their scope for independent or shared activity or to follow their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Teaching is satisfactory with some strengths, in particular the caring relationships and support given to children in helping them develop good personal and social skills. This promotes confidence and the feeling of being valued. Assessment procedures are developing; adults are beginning to share their day-to-day observations of children's achievements but are not yet using these effectively to modify planning to meet individual needs. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Induction arrangements are securely in place and this helps children to settle quickly into school routines.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of provision on pupils' learning.
- Improve the use of assessment to provide pupils with activities which include the appropriate level of challenge or support.
- Ensure that children in the Reception class have sufficient opportunity to choose and develop their own ideas.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average; this represents satisfactory achievement given that pupils start Year 1 with standards that are below what is expected for their age. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress within Key Stage 1 and 2 although the rate of progress is not always consistent because of variability in the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have remained below the national average. An improvement in the English results of the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6 demonstrates the positive impact of the school's priority of raising literacy standards. As a result, the school met the target set for the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age and for those attaining the higher level. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is less secure because not all pupils make enough progress. This is particularly the case for the more able pupils. Consequently, the number of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics is well below average. Pupils' current work and the school's data show that although progress remains satisfactory standards are likely to be lower than the previous year. A significant contributing factor to this is the number of pupils in this year group who experience difficulty with their learning, many of whom have joined the school within the last two years. Generally, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they like most subjects and particularly enjoy sporting activities and making new friends. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Despite pupils' enthusiasm for school, attendance is low in comparison with the national average. However, this is a result of a small group of pupils having significantly high absence rates despite the school's best efforts to bring about improvement. The attendance of the majority of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Young children are learning to understand their feelings and pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect for the views of others, whatever their beliefs or background. This, together with the satisfactory development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, means that pupils develop the attitudes and knowledge needed to make them responsible citizens. Pupils have a good understanding of how they can contribute to their own and others' safety at school and how they can manage risk in their lives beyond school. They confirm that they know where to seek help if troubled. Pupils understand the need for regular exercise and talk at length about the impact of this and healthy eating. They readily take part in various physical activities and events such as the recent 'Fit for Life Fortnight'. Pupils, particularly those who are members of the school council, respond well to the opportunities provided for them to be involved in decision-making processes. They make a good contribution to the wider community through activities and projects such as the 'Spennymoor Letters Project' and discussions with their local Member of Parliament.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving, but there remains variation in the quality of lessons. Relationships are good which means that pupils behave well, and develop good attitudes to learning and a willingness to persevere with tasks. Teachers generally provide good explanations of what pupils are required to learn and in some year groups, pupils experience a good range of teaching and learning styles. This includes practical tasks and problem-solving activities that keep them well motivated. This is not yet consistent throughout the school. The school's new assessment procedures provide the school with the information needed to accurately group pupils according to their prior ability. However, teachers do not consistently use their daily assessments to provide the level of support or challenge needed to ensure that pupils of differing abilities make the progress of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The school's emphasis on developing basic skills, particularly literacy, helps pupils to make satisfactory progress. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision has improved significantly since the last inspection and all pupils now have the opportunities needed to help them improve their skills in this area of the curriculum. A strength of the curriculum is the promotion of pupils' personal development. Effective personal, social and emotional programmes enable pupils to develop a sense of shared values and also help them understand how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to enrich their learning such as visits from theatre

groups and musicians, and visitors from other cultures and faiths. A wide range of extra-curricular activities are offered and sporting activities are popular. Themed weeks such as the 'Fit for Life Fortnight' impact well on pupils' enjoyment of school. However, the day-to-day content of lessons is sometimes unexciting and does not always capture pupils' interest or enthusiasm; this slows their rate of progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The pastoral care of pupils is good and makes a positive contribution to them developing good personal qualities. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet national guidelines. Pupils say they feel safe and that there are adults that they can go to for support. Arrangements for starting school and moving onto secondary school are securely in place. Parents are generally happy with the care and support the school gives to their children. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by teaching assistants who help them to learn at the same rate as their peers. There are good links with outside agencies to support pupils' well-being. The school is at the early stages of telling pupils how to improve their work. Where pupils are given good guidance on how to improve their work there is a positive impact on learning. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the main improvement priorities have been identified. The impact of change has been significant in the improvement in the curriculum provision for ICT, a key issue identified at the last inspection, and a steady improvement in pupils' progress in literacy by the end of Year 6. However, the actions taken to improve the rate of progress in mathematics have been less successful, and consequently the school did not reach its challenging targets in 2007. One of the main reasons for this is that the school's monitoring of provision does not check closely enough on the impact on pupils' learning. As a result, teaching remains variable in quality and the curriculum is not always well enough adapted to meet individual pupils' needs. Staff work well as a team and the school is beginning to address these issues. However, it is too soon to judge the impact on standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of King Street Primary School, Durham, DL16 6RA

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and for helping my colleague and I when we came to visit your school. I would like to tell you what we found out.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. Your behaviour is good; you get on well together and take good care of each other. You enjoy your learning and try hard. We enjoyed chatting with some of you and learning about the things you do. We think you have some exciting visitors and trips out of school and that these help you to enjoy your learning.

You are making satisfactory progress and have worked hard to improve your reading and writing. I could see from your work how well you do on Fridays in your 'Big Writing' work. Well done! You told me that the lessons you like the best are those that are exciting and fun, and that you like new challenges. I have suggested that the staff give you a good variety of things to do in all lessons, and provide extra challenges for those of you who find your work easy and help for those who find work too hard. I have also asked that those of you who are in the Reception class are given more chances to choose your activities. Staff are going to check that changes enable you to make more progress.

You can help to make your school even better by all trying to come to school every day.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had throughout the two days and for letting us know your views so clearly. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector