

# Bridgewater Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108466
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	324776
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	181
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	42
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lyn Stephenson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Samantha Robson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Delaval Road Scotswood Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE15 6NL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2745290
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2753296

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<b>Age group</b>	0–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area of significant social and economic deprivation. It has a fully integrated Early Years Foundation Stage unit for children aged nought to five years of age which provides wrap-around childcare and extended services for children and families in the local community for at least 50 weeks a year. The Early Years provision was created in 2006 from the amalgamation of three Nursery settings and other pre-school provision. A very high proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. One third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An above average, and growing proportion of pupils, are from families, mainly eastern European, where English is not spoken at home. Over a quarter of pupils enter or leave the school at other than the usual times. A significant proportion of pupils are considered to be vulnerable. A new headteacher was appointed from January 2009.

The recently refurbished and much enlarged building also hosts an Additionally Resourced Centre (ARC), under the control of the school, for the assessment of children under seven years of age with complex learning difficulties from across the city, and a Sure Start setting, which works in close liaison with, but separately from, the school.

## 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 and rapidly improving school. It has clear strengths in: the care and support it provides for pupils and families; the personal development and well-being these build in pupils; and the sense of dynamic purpose and vibrant team spirit quickly and successfully fostered by the recently appointed headteacher. It has emerged from a period of significant disruption caused by reorganisation and amalgamation, large scale rebuilding and a change of leadership, with its pastoral ethos intact, its vision strengthened, and its potential enhanced.

Standards are below average in all basic skills. Pupils' achievement from entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. No group of pupils underachieves. Pupils enter the school with clear weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, and their personal, social and emotional development. Many pupils' academic skills, particularly in English, are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that they reach the national average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good. Skilful and well placed pastoral care ensures that pupils quickly learn to treat each other with respect, and have a growing sense of confidence in themselves. When they leave school, pupils are polite, thoughtful and mature young people, adequately prepared as individuals for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. The best lessons are dynamic events, with attractive and well planned tasks which quickly grasp and sustain pupils' interest. These successful lessons encourage pupils to think for themselves. Other lessons are less stimulating; work does not match pupils' different skills and abilities closely enough and therefore lacks appropriate challenge. Learning is slower in these lessons.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Lessons are currently being reorganised to give pupils more opportunities to apply what they know in a range of different, realistic learning experiences. These changes, though well founded, have yet to show their full impact on the standards pupils reach. A good range of interesting activities outside the classroom are well liked by pupils. These enrich their learning and widen their horizons.

The care, guidance and support pupils receive is satisfactory overall. Provision for the pastoral care of pupils is very good, because highly committed staff make very effective use of the great deal of information they know about pupils to ensure they receive any personal support they need very quickly. Academic guidance is neither as sophisticated nor as effective. Teachers have accurate information about what pupils know, but do not make enough use of it. Work is sometimes not planned well enough to match all pupils' needs, nor is information used consistently to set targets which will help them to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Through honest and objective self-evaluation, the skilful leadership of the new headteacher quickly and accurately identified areas requiring improvement. Immediate, well informed yet sensitive action has been taken to address them. Throughout the school, a very clear focus on learning has been set, which the staff team fully understand. Middle leaders are beginning to take responsibility for planning in their subjects, and the senior leadership team are now working as a single collective entity. Neither group as yet takes full accountability for the progress pupils make. Though it is too soon to see the full impact of actions taken, the school has a good capacity for improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children under three years of age, and their parents, are provided with good experiences supported through positive relationships in an inclusive pre-school environment. These ensure that children's welfare and personal development needs are well catered for, and now provide a seamless transition into the Nursery.

When children start in the Nursery, their knowledge and skills are well below what is typically expected for their age. Their language and communication skills, and their personal, social and emotional development, are areas of particular weakness. Staff give a consistently high priority to children's personal, social and emotional development, and they make good progress in developing these key skills. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The indoor classrooms are stimulating, colourful and support transition and communication well. A good mix of child-initiated activities and focused teaching encourages children to make sound progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, standards remain below what is typical for their age. Use of the outdoor area is limited for activities because of lack of access, and this reduces opportunities to extend learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Early Years Foundation Stage unit has good partnerships with professional services, other agencies and community groups and provides effective advice, guidance and support. Recent changes in organisation have markedly improved consistency in planning and assessment, and have refocused activities on to improving children's skills and knowledge. This is reflected in a comment by one parent, typical of others: 'My child has progressed in all aspects of her education'. There is a clear sense of direction and unity of purpose. This is beginning to impact well on developing consistent and cohesive practice across the full range of provisions available within the unit.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and raise standards across the school, particularly in English.
- Ensure that better use is made of assessment information and more lessons have an appropriate match of work to learners' needs, with greater challenge for pupils of all abilities.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels are more accountable for the quality of learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure that the outdoor area is available for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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. Achievement is satisfactory. Satisfactory provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage results in children making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Unvalidated national test results in Year 2 in 2008 in reading and writing were below national expectations. Nonetheless, given their low starting points, Key Stage 1 pupils made satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been showing a rising trend for four years, and provisional results were close to the national average in 2008. However, as the school very honestly recognises, these results are not due to any major improvements

in the rate at which pupils learn. Pupils in Year 6 in 2008 made satisfactory progress when considering their below average starting points, though standards in English remained lower than in other subjects. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in several classes across the school are now learning more quickly. This is a result of recently introduced initiatives which are focused more rigorously on helping pupils to make accelerated progress. Pupils at the early stage of learning English, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the accurately targeted support they receive. Pupils in the ARC make satisfactory progress and transfer successfully to other provision following assessment.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

A very calm ethos of respect, tolerance and honesty pervades the school, and clearly underpins the good personal development and well-being, and good behaviour, of pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for. They are confident that any bullying or friendship problems will be resolved quickly and fairly. They enjoy coming to school and this is evident in the good relationships with staff. Attendance is broadly average and has improved noticeably since the turn of the year. Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and speak with certainty about the value of fruit and vegetables. Very large numbers participate in many sporting activities during and after school. Their experience of other cultures is broadened through links with other schools in the city, and through the different countries of origin of pupils in the school. Pupils have good experiences of involvement in the community with regular access to other facilities and venues for additional sporting and cultural activities. Pupils' broadly average level of basic skills ensures they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Many lessons have good features but learning is inconsistent from class to class. In all lessons, relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils make the best progress and learn well when lessons have a range of activities which closely meet the needs of all pupils. These lessons occur when teachers make good use of their knowledge of what pupils know and can do to provide effective planning. Teachers provide activities which build on previous learning, and have the correct level of challenge for all pupils. These lessons typically have short, sharp tasks which capture and hold pupils' interest, and present many opportunities for pupils to work independently and think for themselves. In some lessons, work does not match pupils' needs well enough. Single tasks set for the whole class do not stretch more able pupils, while less able pupils find the work too hard. Usually, in these lessons, teachers tend to talk too much, explaining what pupils are about to learn, while pupils sit patiently waiting to start. Inevitably, this causes learning and progress to slow.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school is now developing ways of bringing more relevance to what pupils are learning. A good example of this is the recent and very successful 'Hooray for Scotswood' week, which gave pupils a broad and varied range of experiences, and allowed them to practise skills learned

in one subject across a range of subjects. This new way of working has yet to show its full impact on pupils' learning.

Pupils say they enjoy and are keen to access the good variety of activities outside of the school day, such as football, drama, cheerleading, and the computer and arts clubs. Provision for personal, social and health education is good, and is reflected in the positive attitudes to learning the vast majority of pupils have. The successful introduction of French is broadening pupils' views of the world, and good computer facilities encourage pupils to follow up interests and develop a wider range of personal skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements. A strong team of dedicated pastoral staff know the pupils well. They are trusted by pupils who are confident to approach them for help and advice should the need arise. Partnerships between the school, parents, and outside professional and voluntary agencies are close and fast-acting, and help to ensure that the significant numbers of vulnerable children in the school are well supported. Parents are effusive in their comments about the work of the school, and this is typified by comments such as, 'Teachers and support workers are excellent, and communicate very well with us'. Adults in school work together across phases to ensure effective transition arrangements, continuous care, and support for all pupils. They are skilled at tracking pupils' pastoral progress, alert to detecting areas of concern and quick to ensure that appropriate support is put into place, including voluntary access to the 'Chill Club' at lunchtimes. Although there is good care and support for pupils, academic guidance is less well developed, and inconsistently applied. Recently introduced individual targets for learning are not yet fully understood by all pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The clear and decisive leadership of the new headteacher has quickly reinvigorated the team spirit dispersed during the recent disruptions. Staff report that they now feel 'empowered' and 're-enthused'. A new and energetic leadership group has quickly gained the respect of the staff, whose morale is high. However, leaders at all levels are not yet fully accountable for the learning that goes on in their areas of responsibility. The school is a very attractive and peaceful environment for learning, and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Self-evaluation is accurate, because the school is objective about its strengths and areas for improvement. Provision for community cohesion is good. Close links with the local community are typified by pupils' involvement in the Scotswood Community Garden, and there are effective cultural links with a French school. A thorough audit has helped the school to see how it can improve this aspect further. The school pays very close attention to ensuring that all forms of inequality are addressed rigorously, and diversity is recognised and celebrated. Governance is satisfactory; members of the governing body understand the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. They are increasingly supporting the work of the school, particularly within the local community, but are not yet in a position to robustly challenge the school about the progress being made by pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, because of the radically

improved attendance, and full integration of the previously disparate aspects of the school, there is good capacity to secure further improvements.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridgewater Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE15 6NR

Thank for being so helpful and polite to us when we inspected your school recently. We were very impressed with your good behaviour throughout the school day. You helped us a great deal by telling us what you felt about your school.

We found that Bridgewater is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. The strongest parts of the school are:

- the clear leadership of your headteacher which is helping the school to move forward by paying strong attention to helping you all to learn more
- the good links the school has with a range of organisations and people which help the adults in school to take good care of you
- the good range of extra-curricular activities available to you, which help to broaden your view of the world, and to understand it better.

However, we also found that the school could be better in some areas, and these are the things we want the school to improve.

- Make sure that the levels you reach, particularly in English, rise more quickly than they are doing now.
- Use assessment information more effectively when planning lessons so that the work you are set regularly challenges all of you.
- Check more closely that you are all learning new things more rapidly in lessons.
- Finish the outside areas so that all of you, but particularly the children in the Nursery and Reception classes, can benefit from the full range of exciting learning experiences.

Each one of you can play a part in improving your school by attending well and by continuing to work hard in lessons.

May I wish you all very good luck for the future!

Yours faithfully

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector