

# Levendale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111566
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	325402
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Ripley HMI

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	217
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	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Jupp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sandra Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<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>	Mount Leven Road Yarm TS15 9RJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 783 684
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 783 684

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and inspected the following issues: the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); pupils' standards and achievement; teaching and learning; pupils' personal development and well-being; and leadership and management. This was done by gathering evidence from lesson observations, examining a sample of pupils' work in books and on display, scrutinising the school's documentation and questionnaires completed by parents, and by talking with pupils and staff.

Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail but the inspectors found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were accurate and justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Almost all the pupils attending this average sized school are from White British backgrounds. It serves an area of social and economic advantage. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with a statement of special educational need and from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. Very few pupils have a first language other than English. A Nursery and a Reception class provide the EYFS education. The school has received several awards including Healthy Schools Gold Award, Activemark, Foundation Level International Schools Award, National Standard in Drugs Education and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Levensdale has continued the improving trend which was reported at the last inspection. It is now outstanding in all its work, providing an excellent quality of education and a high standard of care for all its pupils. This is because of expert leadership and the commitment of all of the staff, who know each pupil very well, set their sights high and are determined to fulfil the school's aim of 'achievement for all'. This ensures that all pupils progress as well as they can and utilise their individual gifts and talents whatever their starting point. Consequently, pupils' achievement and personal development are outstanding. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate portrayal of its effectiveness. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has a clear understanding of what to do next. As a result, the school's capacity to improve further is excellent.

Teaching is excellent and consistent throughout the school. Pupils are actively engaged participants, who demonstrate sustained concentration and impressive verbal, thinking and reasoning skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were undertaking an enquiry to decide whether it would be good or bad if there were no grown-ups. Pupils demonstrated respect for each other, paying attention and listening carefully to alternative views. Very young pupils debated and answered their own questions with insight: 'How old do you have to be to be a grown-up?' 'If there were no adults how would children be born?' 'Who would look after us, would we be safe and would we feel lonely?' Pupils piped up very quickly with responses like: of course they'd be sad without their parents but not lonely because they'd have each other and older children would look after them. Adults will be reassured to know that the pupils concluded grown-ups are a good thing!

Typically, pupils are engrossed in their learning. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and are carefully planned to incorporate a variety of strategies and themes. Teachers' skilful questioning and strong subject knowledge enthuses and includes all pupils. Activities match pupils' abilities well so that all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well. Literacy and numeracy are imaginatively consolidated in all lessons. This reinforcement and the confidence and enjoyment of learning that teachers instil in pupils means they thrive as they move through the school and develop into well rounded and confident individuals who are well prepared for future life.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively in lessons and as a well organised whole-school management tool; for instance, to record pupils' progress. Strategies to include pupils in assessing their own and each others' learning are developing well. Teachers carefully monitor progress and understanding during lessons, acting on the feedback they receive to reinforce or recap learning points. For example, in a mathematics lesson several pupils indicated that they felt they needed more practice in mastering sequencing tasks. The teacher responded quickly, drawing pupils into discussions to spot patterns in examples and asked several pupils to demonstrate what they had found. Eventually all pupils understood.

Classrooms are vibrant and inviting. Staff make the best use of limited space and pupils cope extremely maturely with the potential distractions of cramped semi-open-plan accommodation. Classroom assistants are deployed very effectively and resources are used creatively. Well targeted additional support is available for those who need it. Pupils understand very clearly what their targets are and how well they are doing. Pupils' work in books and displays around the school is of a high standard. Marking is good overall and rewards pupils' success. Comments

provide plenty of praise and encouragement and tell pupils what has gone well. However, they do not always indicate how further progress can be made, so opportunities for pupils to refine and correct their work are missed.

Pupils respond very well to the high standard of teaching and care they receive. As a result they are keen and happy learners who look forward to coming to school and enjoy all it has to offer, including the good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. The pupils' outstanding behaviour and excellent attendance bears witness to this. The stimulus, positive experiences and the challenge they are provided with ensure outstanding achievement throughout the school. The school consistently meets or exceeds the challenging targets it sets itself and academic standards are well above average at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Despite some variation between different year groups, an improving trend has been maintained throughout the last three years in the results in Year 6 national tests in all three core subjects. Between 2005 and 2008, almost every pupil at age seven and eleven gained at least the nationally expected level in English, mathematics and science. A significant proportion of pupils reach the higher levels of attainment by the time they leave. This makes a strong contribution to their future economic well-being.

Pupils report that there is always an adult they can go to if they have any kind of problem and there is 'virtually no bullying'. Pupils are rightly proud of the school and their achievements. They know that they matter as individuals and that their opinions are heard. Consequently, they feel very safe and secure and develop into polite and caring young people. Pupils are eager to learn how to take care of themselves and keep healthy. They want to make a positive contribution to the life of the school, for instance, as monitors and helping to set out outdoor play equipment for the children in the EYFS. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils enjoy corresponding with their overseas pen-pals, participating in the 'Euro-language' competition and finding out about life in other countries from visitors to the school. Pupils have a well developed sense of social responsibility. They talk with feeling about children who are less fortunate than themselves both at home and overseas and are eager to explain how they try to make a difference through various fundraising events they organise and plan themselves.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Many believe they are lucky that their children attend this school because they are 'taken on an amazing learning journey, developing socially, personally and educationally due to the strong commitment of staff'. Other parents comment that 'the school is at the heart of the local community and brings people together, teachers are approachable and friendly, listen to parents' views, take on board any concerns they may have and make every effort to bring them into the school'. Levensdale's commitment to community cohesion is further demonstrated by its achievement of the International School Award and its designation as a Creative Partnership School' which brings members of the local community into the school to help with various pupil activities as well as hosting community events.

Leadership and management are outstanding. All safeguarding requirements are met. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and vision strongly supported by a recently expanded senior leadership team. Classroom assistants and other support staff are highly valued and have a very positive impact. Governors make a full contribution to the life of the school, as does the very strong parent teacher association. The staff as a whole form a cheerful, motivated and cohesive team and are eager to develop their skills and abilities further. They routinely share expertise and ideas and participate in a wide range of professional training and development activities which are well matched to the school's improvement plan. Assessment

of pupils' progress is rigorous and comprehensive. Actions are regularly monitored and evaluated. Planning and management information is used consistently throughout the school because it is practical, readily understood and its benefits are tangible. Its impact is seen in the positive outcomes it reaps: for pupils through the high standards they achieve and their outstanding personal development; and for the school through its deservedly excellent local reputation.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Despite cramped accommodation, particularly in Reception, staff create a warm and stimulating environment. Children's skills develop very well across the curriculum and they make excellent progress. When children enter Nursery their skills are typical of this age group, but by the time they leave Reception those skills are higher than average in all areas of learning. This is due to excellent learning, a vibrant curriculum and a very high standard of care. Basic skills are exceptionally well consolidated throughout the day and through children's independent activities. Staff are enthusiastic and highly skilled; they consistently challenge children's learning, especially language, by their questioning, commentaries and modelling. Children benefit from these many adult interactions and grow in self-esteem. There is an effective balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities and classrooms are well organised and stocked to allow easy access to resources. Personal, social and emotional development has priority. There are well established procedures throughout EYFS and staff have high expectations of courtesy and consideration. Children establish effective relationships with adults and other children and cooperate very well. All statutory welfare requirements are met and staff are vigilant about hand washing and other health and safety issues. They take time to explain to the children why such rules exist, so children feel safe and happy. Leadership and management are excellent. The EYFS leader ensures that provision meets the needs of all the children and has accurately identified plans for further development outdoors. Currently, the school uses limited outside space imaginatively to extend all indoor learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve marking so that it consistently indicates to pupils how further progress can be made and how they can refine and correct their work.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## 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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

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

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

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Dear Children

Inspection of Levensdale Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS15 9RJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was a pleasure to see you all so happy, working so very hard and making such good progress in lessons. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing you all enthusiastically and energetically rehearsing for your Christmas concert. We noticed how good the older children were at helping the younger ones learn their songs and routines. You told us you love coming to school and enjoy learning because there is always so much to do and the teachers make lessons fun. You said that your school is excellent and we agree with you. Your school is outstanding in all aspects of its work. It provides you with an excellent education and it cares for you exceptionally well. You respond to this very well by achieving very high standards and becoming mature and confident young people who have every chance to make the most of your education in your next school.

Your school is outstanding because your headteacher leads it exceptionally well and is helped in this by all the staff, the governors and your parents. The teachers and classroom assistants teach you extremely well and give you activities that make learning exciting. They also provide you with plenty of trips, visits and extra activities outside of lessons. All the staff know you very well and keep a very close eye on what you are doing. They listen to what you have to say and encourage you to take part in the life of the school.

We liked everything that we saw in your school including the Early Years Foundation Stage, which gives all of you a great start when you first join the school. The headteacher and school staff are doing exactly what is needed to make your school even better although there is one additional thing we have asked them to do. This is to make sure that when they mark your work they tell you what you could do to make it even better and give you opportunities to improve it.

You are quite rightly proud of your school and all the things you achieve. You are excellent ambassadors for your school, being extremely polite and well-behaved young people who respect and look after each other. You and your teachers make a very strong team and work hard to ensure that, as your school aim says, there is 'achievement for all'. Very Well done!

Good luck and all best wishes for the future.

Wendy Ripley, HMI

Joan Elton, Additional inspector