

Peases West Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114058
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325934
Inspection date	28 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Tony Painter

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	126
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Ross
Headteacher	Miss Judith Stirk
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Billy Row Crook County Durham DL15 9SZ
Telephone number	01388 762380
Fax number	01388 768675

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- How effectively the school uses assessment and other systems to match work to pupils' needs.
- The extent to which good care and support are leading to positive outcomes for pupils' personal and social development.
- How well the new leadership structure is focusing the school on what is needed to improve progress and standards.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation documents, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parental questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized rural school that lies in an area of significant social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Few pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds and all have English as their home language. There are high levels of mobility into and out of the school; many of those joining the school have significant social or academic difficulties. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is in the Nursery and a Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school lies at the heart of the local community and does a very good job of ensuring pupils enjoy their education. Parents are very supportive: 'We think it's a great school with a family atmosphere', said one, echoing the views of the vast majority. The school has good systems to care for pupils and ensure their safety, with safeguarding systems fully meeting the statutory requirements. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibilities within the school and they show their pride in their actions and achievements. Good personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is reflected in their confident discussion and good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy. Absence levels are a little higher than average and the school has very good systems to promote good attendance. Strong links with agencies supporting children and their families, innovative schemes such as the food cooperative and the many established links with schools abroad widen pupils' understanding and make a good contribution to community cohesion.

Most children join the Nursery with a limited range of earlier experiences and their levels of development are well below those typical for their age. Although they make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, few reach the learning goals for the EYFS. Pupils' attainment on joining Year 1 remains below average. Pupils make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 and standards by the time they leave are broadly average. However, these can vary from year to year depending on the groups of pupils involved. This school is very inclusive and makes a point of providing for pupils with a wide range of academic, social and behavioural needs. This includes a significant number of pupils who join the school partway through their primary school careers. The support for these pupils is good. Their needs are quickly and accurately identified and effective provision ensures that they make as good progress as other pupils. However, in a small school such as this, the impact of a few such pupils in any year group can have significant effects on the school's overall results. Over time, the school's results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils have been broadly average. This represents good achievement for these pupils from their low starting points.

The pupils' good progress through the school is a reflection of the good teaching and the very wide range of activities they are given. The school has worked effectively to provide a creative curriculum with a strong focus on widening pupils' experiences. Thus, each term much of pupils' work focuses on a different country and they develop good understanding of the lives of others. They find real purpose in their writing, for example, to pupils in schools in Japan and Russia. Pupils' experiences are also enhanced by the many visitors and opportunities to learn outside the school. Amongst the regular visitors are artists, musicians and a host of local people who are able to contribute skills and knowledge. The positive outcomes can be seen in the artwork around the school and the enthusiasm with which pupils tackle new skills such as learning to play the ukulele. Extra-curricular activities such as the walking club and sports opportunities have a positive impact in linking parents with the school.

Teachers have extremely good relationships with pupils and effective strategies to maintain a good learning environment and pace to pupils' learning. As a result, pupils develop increasing confidence, behave well and show real interest in their work. Teaching is making increasingly good use of new strategies to help pupils learn, including a greater emphasis on discussion which is encouraging pupils' speaking and listening skills. A range of supporting materials and effective marking mean pupils know what they need to do to improve. The teachers' good personal knowledge of pupils is used effectively to group those with different needs within

classes. The school has improved its approach to assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress. This is giving a clear and accurate picture of how well pupils are doing and, crucially, where any underachievement is beginning to appear. A wide range of extra or alternative approaches to teaching are targeted at addressing any such concerns. However, teachers do not always make rigorous use of the assessment information when planning pupils' work for lessons. For example, tasks for higher attaining pupils do not consistently challenge them to perform at the highest levels.

As well as improving the assessment systems, the school has radically revised its leadership and management systems since the last inspection. The new structure gives greater opportunities and responsibilities to a number of staff to lead school improvements. These changes have been very positive and are leading to a wider picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior staff are having appropriate training for their new roles and playing an increasing part in monitoring the work of the school. They show great enthusiasm for these changes and this is reflected in the positive responses from other staff and a united approach. Good links between the staff and the governing body mean that governors understand the school and play an important active role in identifying what it needs to do to improve. Effective joint working ensures the right priorities for the school are identified and are set out in the school's improvement planning with appropriate responsibilities allocated across the senior management team. However, planning lacks clarity in some areas, particularly in setting out precisely how success will be measured. The positive impact of the new management approaches, coupled to greater attention to regularly reviewing performance, are beginning to be seen in pupils' improving progress. For example, some pupil targets are now being revised upwards as it seems more likely that they will perform above the levels originally expected. These positive factors indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the EYFS is good. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes in all areas of learning but by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is still below average. Children get off to a good start because induction arrangements, including home visits and the good partnership with parents, help staff to get to know each individual child. Children's welfare is a priority. Careful observation procedures and good assessment arrangements assist staff in quickly identifying and providing support for those who have additional learning needs. Children achieve well because staff give time and attention to individuals. They mostly teach children in small groups to encourage their speaking skills. Children enjoy discussing the models they make and learning capacity words while playing with sand. Planning clearly shows what children are expected to learn from adult-directed and self-chosen activities. The strong emphasis on letter sounds is having a good impact on children's progress. Children are well motivated and benefit from the range of activities both indoors and outside. They develop independence and confidently make sensible choices about their activities. Children enjoy new friendships and play and learn well together, for example when playing computer generated games. Leadership is good. The enthusiastic EYFS leader has assigned a key person to each child. Assessment data and information are now being used to analyse strengths and needs. As a result, stronger emphasis is being given to areas where progress is weaker. Teamwork is developing well and staff plan together to ensure activities match learning needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure assessment and tracking data are used to plan work that promotes the learning of pupils of different abilities, particularly higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure planning for school improvement is more detailed with clear indications of how successes will be measured.

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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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

1 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peases West Primary School, Durham, DL15 9SZ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave to me and Mrs Ulyatt when we inspected the school last week. You were all very helpful and keen to tell us all about your school and the work you were doing. We were also pleased to read all the comments from the questionnaires that your parents sent us, please thank them for us.

You told us that you thought your school is good and we agree with you. Good care helps you to feel safe and gives you the confidence to try hard. The school is particularly good at giving you lots of opportunities to find out how people live around the world through your termly themes about other countries. The links that the school has with artists and musicians and the wide range of out of school activities give you lots of opportunities to try out new things. The school gives you a good range of experiences in lessons and good teaching helps you to improve your work well all through the school.

The staff have already improved the ways they check how well you are doing and you know how your targets are helping you to improve your work. I have asked the school to go a bit further to make sure that you are all given tasks that will challenge each of you to do your very best work. I have also asked the school to be a bit more precise when they are planning how to make the school better, in particular to spell out clearly how they will measure how much things have improved.

Thank you again for showing me your school. I wish you and your families the very best for the future.

Tony Painter

Lead inspector