

# Pelton Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 134078               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Durham               |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 328822               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 25–26 February 2009  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Christine Graham 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)   | 398  |
| 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>   | Mrs Jackie Simpson   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mr Ivor Williams   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 28 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>  | Ouston Lane<br>Pelton<br>Chester le Street<br>County Durham<br>DH2 1EZ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 0191 3700260   |
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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Pelton Primary School is larger than most primary schools. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small proportion of pupils of Gypsy Roma or Traveller heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is in line with the national average, however, the school caters for pupils with physical disabilities and some pupils have very significant needs. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award, Artsmark Award and a number of sports awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Pelton Primary School is a good school. It is a popular choice within the local community and as result pupil numbers are reasonably stable from year-to-year. Some children join the school at other than the usual times and, although most of these new admissions are the result of families moving into the area, some pupils have had difficulties at previous schools. Parents are delighted with all that the school provides. Many parents who responded to the questionnaire were particularly pleased with the support and care provided by the school. They spoke very enthusiastically about how well this promotes pupils' enjoyment of school and helps them settle in quickly and thrive.

When pupils start school many can do less than is typically expected for their age. They get off to a very good start in Nursery and continue to make good progress as they move through the school, although this progress is not always consistent from year-to-year or between classes. The outcomes of national tests and assessments show that by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are generally in line with national averages, although fewer pupils reach the highest levels, particularly in reading and writing, than do so nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are at least in line and sometimes above or well above the national figure. In 2008, an exceptionally high proportion of pupils reached the highest level in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good range of skills and expertise which are used very effectively to enhance all aspects of school life. However, some pupils do not make the progress that they could because, although the school tracks the progress made by pupils effectively, the information this system provides is not used well enough to ensure that the work provided for pupils meets their most pressing needs. Senior and middle leaders observe lessons but feedback after lesson observations is sometimes too positive or not sufficiently well focused on pupils' progress. The school employs a large number of teaching assistants and higher level teaching assistants and the skilled support they provide does much to promote pupils' achievement. The curriculum is good. It is enhanced by the very good provision made for sport, music and drama.

Pupils are well cared for and supported. They are self-confident and articulate and have good opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported because the school has very effective systems and procedures and works well in partnership with parents and external agencies. However, although the behaviour seen in lessons during the inspection was good, there have been a high number of fixed term exclusions since September 2008. Pupils do not have a good enough understanding of the diversity of British society and have only limited understanding of communities outside of the school and local area. Guidance is satisfactory. Pupils receive good moral and social guidance but academic guidance is not as effective. Although pupils know their targets, teachers do not provide them with sufficiently detailed feedback through marking to help them improve their work. Systems to help pupils assess their understanding and progress have been introduced but these are not yet fully established throughout the school.

Leadership is good. The headteacher provides skilled and experienced leadership. He has successfully steered the school through a number of very significant changes and has created a stable, effective and talented staff. Teachers and teaching assistants take on leadership roles with enthusiasm and give of their time willingly to provide additional opportunities for pupils.

The headteacher and governors use the school's resources well. However, governors are too reliant on the headteacher's expertise and are not yet able to challenge the school in order to help it improve further. Although self evaluation procedures are very effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they are not as robust in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make good and often very good progress in Nursery because the provision made for them is outstanding. The highly skilled and hard working staff know their children well and ensure that activities meet their needs. All staff work together to plan teaching and learning. They use information from their observations well to pinpoint each child's progress and carefully identify the next steps in learning. The curriculum is good and provides excellent opportunities to develop children's language skills. Children enjoy learning and are happy to attempt tasks on their own. They particularly like imaginative play and independent time where they develop their ideas and discover things for themselves. A good balance of adult-led tasks and those that children choose for themselves encourage children to try new things. Provision for outdoor play is exemplary. Provision in Reception is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to deliver activities which are stimulating and fun. Children are extremely well behaved and polite. They are encouraged to show kindness and to make the right choice and when they do so they are praised and rewarded which further boosts their self-esteem. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but some are not ready for more formal teaching and learning at the start of Year 1. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified promptly and receive sensitive support. Partnerships with other agencies are strong. Leadership and management are good. The Foundation Stage leader monitors the work of staff rigorously and uses the outcomes of her observations to improve further the provision made for children.

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

- Ensure that teachers are given well targeted guidance to help them improve their work.
- Strengthen school self-evaluation.
- Ensure that the work provided for pupils is accurately matched to their ability.
- Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are in line with national averages. Not all pupils are ready for the demands of more formal teaching and learning on entry to Year 1 but activities are carefully adapted to meet their needs. As a result, they build upon the progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good and sometimes very good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school sets and meets challenging targets. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 has been in line with or sometimes above national averages in all core subjects for the last three years. Results of the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, however, fewer pupils

reached higher levels in reading and writing. At Key Stage 2, standards were in line with national averages in science and above the national figure in English and mathematics. A much higher proportion of pupils reached Level 5 in English than did so nationally. The progress of different groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from Gypsy Roma or Traveller backgrounds, is good. However, although pupils make good progress by the end of their time in school progress within classes and between year groups is more variable, because not all teaching is well enough matched to pupils' needs.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are proud of the school and they have an accurate understanding of its many strengths. They appreciate all that is done for them and enjoy their education. Pupils have good attitudes towards their work and behave well in lessons. However, pupils, parents and staff report that a very small proportion of pupils, usually those with social and emotional problems, have very challenging behaviour which can result in physical or verbal aggression and bullying of other pupils at break or lunchtimes. Although the school tries to deal with these difficulties through support and reward this is not always successful. Pupil's spiritual and moral and social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have very good opportunities to carry out real responsibilities within the school. For example, the house captains and their deputies take their responsibilities very seriously. They know that they must set an example and intervene to resolve problems promptly so that house points are not lost. They are responsible for picking teams for the many house matches and manage to reconcile a desire to win with the need to ensure that team selection is fair and everyone is given a chance. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle through their participation in sport and by the very effective organisation of school lunches. Lunches are cooked to order so every child gets a freshly cooked meal which they know they will enjoy. School staff report that pupils are also choosing healthy options for snacks and lunch boxes. Pupils have good relationships with staff and they are happy to share their ideas and opinions with others. Performing arts are given a high priority in the school and this promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' good achievement and high self-esteem ensure that they are well prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the skills needed to ensure that pupils make progress. Their individual skills, talents and commitment enhance all aspects of school life and do much to promote pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school. Pupils behave well in lessons and have very positive attitudes. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers use questioning well to engage pupils and develop their understanding. However, learning is not always effective because teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of information gained from day-to-day and longer term assessments and does not focus well enough on how pupils of different abilities will learn. Although the activities provided for pupils are interesting they are not always well matched to pupils' most pressing needs. The school has introduced a system which helps pupils to assess their understanding of the lesson and indicate where further help is needed but this is only used in a few classes. Although most teachers plan the work of teaching assistants well, in some cases not enough use is made of

their skills. In the best lessons teachers planned interesting activities for pupils of different abilities. They corrected misunderstandings, challenged the most able pupils and provided effective support and guidance which helped all pupils make good progress. In these lessons, teachers worked very effectively with small groups of pupils, reinforcing teaching and consolidating pupils' understanding. Evidence in pupils' books confirms that pupils in these classes make good and occasionally excellent progress over the longer term.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It is considerably enriched by the very good range of sporting opportunities available both during and after school and by the school's commitment to music and drama. The school has introduced French and links have been made with a school in France. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to enhance learning and the introduction of an ICT based programme to improve spelling is proving popular with staff and pupils. The school has put a great deal of effort and funding into improving the school grounds which now provide interesting opportunities for pupils of all ages to learn outside the classroom. There is a good range of after-school clubs and activities, house and local competitions and whole school events such as the recent cross country competition. Pupils of all ages can participate and have fun.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very well cared for and supported. Any difficulties or problems are identified promptly. Teaching assistants are used to provide additional support for pupils with speech and language problems and the school has very effective partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies which ensure that pupils get the help they need. However, the school does not have reciprocal arrangements which would allow pupils at risk of exclusion to be educated at another school. This means that some pupils receive fixed term exclusions. The proportion of fixed term exclusions has risen significantly this year. Other pupils report that this helps them to feel safe because if an incident does occur they know it will be dealt with promptly. However, 34 days have been lost to exclusion this year and this will have an impact on the progress made by those pupils. The headteacher and staff do all they can to ensure that children make the most of their education and they are encouraged to try new things or participate in events. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and tactful support ensures that all children can take part in all activities. Pupils receive good moral guidance and the school has implemented all the latest guidance on safeguarding pupils. Academic guidance is not as effective. All teachers mark pupils' work but marking is not specific enough to help pupils improve and pupils are not given opportunities to act on the advice given. Teachers do not routinely work with small groups of pupils during lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has very effectively led the school through amalgamation, the move to a new building and federation with another school. He has created a talented staff and has developed leadership at all levels. The governing body and the headteacher manage the school budget well. Financial resources are used shrewdly to improve pupils' achievement and the outcomes

of the school's work show that this money is well spent. The leadership team have resolved outstanding problems with the building and ensured that the school is well resourced both internally and externally. Parents' commitment to raising money to build a new sports hall says much about the value placed on the school by families and the local community. The relatively new governing body, shared with the partner school, are committed and hard working but they are currently too reliant on the headteacher and are not providing strategic and effective leadership. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development and takes effective action to bring about improvement. However, some of its judgements are too positive because monitoring and evaluation are not always rigorous enough. As a result teachers do not receive accurate feedback which would help them improve their work further.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

**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? | 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?                                 | 2 |

**Achievement and standards**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| 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 |

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<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   | 1 |
| 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   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 |
| 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 learners' needs?</b>       | 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 3   |
| 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  | 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**

27 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Pelton Community Primary School, Durham. DH2 1EZ

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school with Mrs Bradley and Mr Horne. We enjoyed meeting you and visiting your classrooms. You will be pleased to hear that we think your school is a good school. The staff look after you very well and they provide very good care and support for those pupils who need it most. We could see that most of you enjoy school and we thought that you behaved well. I particularly enjoyed talking to the house captains and their deputies and I could see how sensibly they carry out their responsibilities. I was very impressed with the way they understood that being fair and giving everyone an opportunity to play can be just as important as winning. We were sorry to hear that a very small minority of pupils sometimes bully other children or disrupt lessons. We know that the school tries to sort this out through warnings or detentions but not all pupils respond to this and some have to be excluded from school for a short time. When children are not at school they cannot learn so we would like the school to find other alternatives to exclusion so that everyone can benefit from all the interesting things that your school provides.

By the end of Year 6, most children reach Level 4 in all subjects and many reach Level 5. Last year just over half of the pupils attained Level 5 in English and that is quite exceptional. However, although you all achieve well by the end of your time in school you do not make the same amount of progress in all classes or year groups so we have asked the school to improve a few things. When we observed your lessons and looked at your books we noticed that the work you are given is sometimes too easy for some people and too difficult for others. We have asked teachers to use information from assessments and from your work in lessons to plan work which meets the needs of everyone in the class. We would also like teachers to mark your work carefully and tell you exactly how to improve. In one or two classes we noticed that pupils used 'thumbs up, thumbs down', to tell their teachers if they understood or if they needed more help. We think it would be a good idea if something like this was used in all classes so that teachers would know who needed extra support.

The school knows what is going well and what it needs to improve but it does not always check up on things rigorously enough. You are very lucky to have such talented teachers but just like you they need a little extra guidance to help them improve further. We have asked Mr Williams to make sure that they receive this.

Enjoy the rest of the term and our best wishes to you all.

Mrs C E Graham

Her Majesty's Inspector