

Deaf Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114144
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378801
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Harper
Headteacher	Kieran Pavey
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons and six teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders were also considered through questionnaire responses from 43 parents and carers, 11 staff and 62 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress.
- How successfully teachers challenge the needs of pupils of differing abilities in order to secure good progress for all groups across the school, particularly in mathematics.
- How well the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to become independent learners and make best use of their basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), to support learning.
- How successfully all leaders use their roles and responsibilities to improve provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are given additional support from within the school is higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils who receive support from external partners and agencies. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for both Nursery and Reception children, with extended hours available for Nursery children.

Within the last three years the school has achieved awards for Activemark Gold, Basic Skills, and 'Best Primary School 2011 for Contribution to PE and Sport in County Durham'. It also holds Healthy School Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In this good school children get off to an excellent start. In the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage children make exceptional progress. Older pupils continue to have good attitudes to learning which are reflected in their outstanding behaviour in lessons and in more informal situations around the school. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe and achieve well. Most pupils make good progress because of successful relationships and good teaching, although some groups with special educational needs and/or disabilities make only satisfactory progress because activities do not always match their individual needs. Recent strategies to improve the use of assessment to promote pupils' learning have been successful and there are good indications of improving standards across all stages. Although attainment in writing has improved, levels are lower in this area than in reading and in mathematics because too few pupils attain the higher levels.

The effective curriculum provides many additional experiences for pupils, including those offered through strong partnerships with local schools and a range of sports providers. The provision of physical activities is a strength of the school and contributes greatly to pupils' excellent understanding of their personal safety and good adoption of healthy lifestyles. Staff provide increasing opportunities for pupils to widen their understanding of the wider world. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems using their skills in English, mathematics and ICT in other subjects. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the school's commitment to the development of the whole child and recognise the dedication of staff to care for their children. They have excellent relationships with the school, shown in the ever-increasing attendance and pupils' much improved behaviour. They are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning and they take full advantage of opportunities to learn alongside their children. One remark reflective of many states, '...we find the school excellent, both in the education the children receive and how the staff nurture and care for the children'.

The senior leadership team is strong; led extremely effectively by a highly motivated headteacher. His vision for the school builds upon its strengths and steers a determined programme for improvement based upon accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Good and improving skills among the governing body and other leaders support school development well. The results are clearly evident, for instance in the improving standards, the successful development of the Early Years Foundation Stage, increased attendance and the now excellent

behaviour of pupils. There are clear priorities identified for further improvement. As a consequence, the school has a good capacity for sustaining improvement and provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing, especially for those of higher ability, by:
 - making effective use of what pupils can do in order to plan activities that offer individuals the right levels of challenge
 - using marking to feed back successes, to provide opportunities for pupils to correct and improve their work, and to inform them of the next steps in learning.

- Increase the rate of progress made by those pupils whose special educational needs are provided for only within the school, by ensuring that activities in all subjects closely match their individual needs.

- Further develop the creative curriculum by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to use their skills in English, mathematics and ICT across other subjects
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work together, to investigate and to problem-solve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. They are keen to succeed and to please their teachers. They engage eagerly in lessons, demonstrating good levels of concentration. For example, in one English lesson, pupils diligently took notes of words for which they needed an explanation, and created similes and metaphors as they prepared to write their version of 'what happens next', after listening to their class novel.

Pupils make good progress overall. There has been a rising trend of improvement over recent years to levels which are now average, from starting points in the nursery which are below, and for some children, well below age-related expectations. Variations in the size of year groups in this small school mean that the performance of individual pupils can have a significant impact upon overall attainment. Pupils generally leave Year 6 working at expected levels. Present standards are above average in reading and average for mathematics but lower than this in writing. Few pupils attain at the higher levels in Year 2 but the proportions that do so in Year 6 in reading and mathematics are increasing. Overall pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress though the progress gap between them and their peers is rapidly closing. Of these, groups who access outside support make good gains but other groups make less progress because activities are not always well-suited to their individual needs.

Pupils engage very well with other children and with adults. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour which creates a harmonious school where there is high regard

for others. Links within the local community are developing well while those with other more diverse communities are at an earlier stage of development. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and a good number choose to access a wide range of physical activities. They discuss how to keep safe when using the Internet, understand the consequences of their actions and understand their individual responsibility to keep themselves safe. Pupils engage in roles as school councillors and buddies, contributing well to life in school. They take part in local events, raising their profile in the community. Pupils' attendance has improved well and is now above average. Pupils want to come to school and their parents and carers are now more diligent about ensuring that their children attend regularly. Pupils leave school suitably ready for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good-quality teaching motivates pupils' interest because teachers make clear to pupils what they will learn. Pupils' skills and understanding are extended because teachers make sure that pupils understand the lesson objectives, and check to ensure their understanding. Purposeful relationships underpin the positive ethos in classrooms and teachers have a good understanding of the capabilities of each pupil. Good-quality assessment and tracking are used effectively to prepare activities to promote good progress. For most pupils this is effective, but it is less so for some groups with special educational needs and/or disabilities and, in writing, for pupils of higher ability. Although teachers provide positive comments about pupils' work they do not always ensure that pupils have time to consider these and correct past work. Few comments inform pupils of their next steps in learning.

The developing curriculum is becoming more creative and demonstrating better links across different areas of learning. However, an overdependence upon worksheets inhibits pupils from practising their skills in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT in other subjects. It also reduces opportunities for pupils to work together and increase their communication skills as they investigate and solve problems. There are real

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

strengths in the provision of physical activities which pupils readily engage in and have been particularly successful at within the local authority. Older pupils gain in confidence through residential opportunities. A focus on environmental issues is contributing effectively to pupils' understanding of the need to look after the world in which they live.

The good knowledge that staff have of the individual personal and emotional needs of pupils ensures high standards of care. A range of effective support strategies ensures that those pupils who are deemed vulnerable through circumstance engage successfully in school. This has been particularly effective in improving levels of behaviour and attendance. There is an early identification of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the school implements a range of supportive strategies. Although these are largely effective for pupils who have more significant needs, they are not sufficiently precise for pupils who do not receive any support from outside agencies. Well-embedded links with other providers ensure pupils' confident induction and transition at all levels.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, in partnership with his senior leaders, is highly effective in driving the school forward. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are accountable for key areas of the curriculum. They welcome the opportunities to contribute towards decision-making and the improvement plan, and to enhance their own development. There is a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. All leaders and managers are working together to build on existing strengths and to introduce new initiatives which have led to improvements in provision. There are increasingly effective systems in place to track and measure pupils' progress which show good overall impact upon the quality of pupils' achievement.

Members of the governing body use their roles well, to challenge and question proposals made by school leaders. They seek the views of parents and carers and use these in improvement planning. Leaders and managers have a shared commitment to develop pupils who are well-prepared, academically and emotionally, for their next steps in learning. Arrangements for meeting safeguarding requirements are good with clear evidence of actions taken to ensure a safe, protected environment. Good commitment to equal opportunities through effective strategies has largely eliminated any form of discrimination. Although a small number of pupils does less well than the majority, this is recognised in improvement plans aimed at narrowing any gaps. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There is a strong sense of the school community and effective links with the local community. A good awareness of life in other countries, of different faiths and of the diverse society within the United

Kingdom is developing. The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers and provides them with numerous opportunities to engage in their children's learning. They understand the strengths of the school and support wholeheartedly its work to improve even further.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. Of these, a significant proportion has skills which are well below expectations, especially in linking sounds and letters, reading, writing, and space, shape and measure. Although outcomes vary from year to year, children's overall outstanding progress means that attainment is now above average as they enter Year 1. Children make significant gains especially in their personal development and in all aspects of language and literacy. Staff are astute in their gathering of data concerning the daily progress of children. They meticulously record successes and use this knowledge to plan for children's emerging interests and their next steps in learning. Where appropriate, staff develop personalised programmes, tailored to meet individuals' specific learning needs. Learning journals provide detailed records of achievement which are shared successfully with parents and carers with whom links are deeply embedded. Opportunities to learn alongside their children are very popular and parents and carers speak with pride of how this helps them give better support to their children's learning. All of these points confirm how well the Early Years provision has improved and provides outstanding overall effectiveness as a result of the outstanding leadership.

The welcoming and highly attractive setting provides an engaging curriculum both inside and outdoors. Despite the freezing weather, a number of children wanted to be kitted out in their all-weather suits and wellingtons to help build Santa's sleigh and work as elves and reindeer outside. Others, preferring indoor activities, engaged in making snowman biscuits and weaving ribbon through plant climbing-frames to create a Christmas tree effect. There is considerable emphasis upon speaking and listening. Staff are adept at questioning, as they encourage children to reflect, consider and make decisions, extending their vocabulary and use of language. Children demonstrate excellent behaviour as they play together, sharing and taking

turns. They have a very good understanding of their personal hygiene. The leader of the setting has high aspirations and teamwork is seamless with clear evidence of all contributing to improving provision and of outcomes for children. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are of good quality and minimise risk.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the care given to their children and are extremely confident that their children are happy and safe, and that teachers meet their children’s needs well. This is reflected well in the many positive comments received by inspectors including: ‘The teaching and monitoring of children’s work has improved drastically. Children take more responsibility for their own work and progress. Parents are well-informed.’ Another noted: ‘My child really enjoys school and is progressing well. His learning needs/targets are clearly identified which helps me as a parent to support his progress.’ There were no issues raised by parents and carers for consideration by the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Deaf Hill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 133 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	72	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	65	13	30	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	67	12	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	63	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	70	12	28	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	60	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	65	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	60	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	63	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	77	10	23	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Deaf Hill Primary School, Trimdon Station, TS29 6BP

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently.

You go to a good school. We were very impressed with how hard you work in lessons and we enjoyed talking with you about your school. Your behaviour is excellent and we found you to be very polite and helpful. We know that you really enjoy coming to school where you feel extremely safe. We were pleased to see how much your attendance has improved. Children in Nursery and Reception get off to an excellent start and most of you continue to make good progress across school. You appreciate the many additional activities, especially the sporting opportunities at which you do so well. You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and you make a good contribution to your school and to your local community. The effective links with agencies and partners from outside of school mean that you are supported well to learn within a range of different activities. There are excellent opportunities for your parents and carers to understand what you are learning and they appreciate this very much because it helps them to help you learn better.

Teachers try hard to make lessons enjoyable and all staff care for you very well. We have asked them to make sure that you have more opportunities to use your skills in English, number and ICT in practical and investigative activities. We would also like teachers to make better use of your writing assessments to make sure that they set you just the right levels of challenge, especially those of you who find learning easy. We have also asked teachers to provide time for you to correct work, to help you understand what you have to do next to improve further and to set all work at the right level for those of you who find learning more difficult. You can help by making sure that you continue to do your best and keeping up your good attendance.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle
Lead inspector

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