

# Bernard Gilpin Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108830
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	309809
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Bannon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	303
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Robert Heron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann McMaster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Hall Lane Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH5 8DA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5536523
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5536525

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bernard Gilpin Primary School is larger than average. It was built in 1993 to replace separate infant and junior schools and occupies a spacious site. It serves an area that is mixed in terms of socio-economic character. Numbers on roll are in decline, partly as a result of the demolition of some housing near to the school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly speech and/or communication problems, is above average for the size of the school. A slightly above average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Bernard Gilpin Primary is a satisfactory school. It provides a safe environment and parents are right to be happy that their children are well cared for and develop good personal skills.

Standards vary by the time pupils leave school, from average for the 2007 leavers to below average for the current Year 6. However, achievement is broadly satisfactory for all pupils in relation to their starting points when they entered Reception. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. The school has a good caring ethos and promotes a strong sense of right and wrong, resulting in good attendance and behaviour. Pupils show high levels of confidence, such as when performing in talent shows for parents. Pupils act sensibly and safely and they understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They take on responsibility in the school council and show a good awareness of what it takes to be a good citizen. Good social skills and satisfactory basic skills in literacy and numeracy prepare pupils adequately for their future.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers target work at challenging levels, but sometimes do not make clear to pupils how to improve. In lessons where pupils are actively involved in a range of activities using a variety of resources, they learn well. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson pupils learned about capacity extremely well because of the practical use of a drum, and by talking in rhyme. In less effective lessons, for example when teachers talk for too long, usually at the start, pupils are less engaged and lose concentration. Learning is enhanced by a curriculum that is satisfactory overall with good features in personal education, the use of themed weeks, visits and extra-curricular activities. However, there is insufficient promotion of basic skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Leadership has ensured that the school still runs smoothly despite significant staff absence in recent years. Subject leaders are actively involved in improving their subject areas and teachers are given good advice on how to improve by the headteacher and other leaders. However, sometimes the school does not recognise or tackle pupils' underachievement quickly enough. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve because it evaluates itself accurately and knows what is needed to be done. It has been a little slow in acting in the past but improvements have been made since the last inspection.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors hold the school to account and are more involved in school life than at the time of the previous inspection. The return of parents' questionnaires indicates high levels of satisfaction with the school. A typical comment was, 'I would advise anybody and everybody to use this school'.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The quality and provision in the Foundation Stage are good and give children a strong start. The good teaching and relationships in the Reception classes help promote a joy of learning as well as the ability to concentrate and work together effectively. Teamwork is a strong feature of the work of the two Reception classes so that children have regular access to outdoor learning. Here staff use their creative talents well to make learning as enjoyable as possible despite very limited resources and equipment. Attainment on entry varies, but children start in Reception

with standards that are usually below those typical for their age, and make good progress. By the time they move into Year 1 they are generally achieving standards that are typical for their age in all areas of learning. A high priority is given to promoting basic communication, language and literacy skills in practical and enjoyable ways. For example, the more able children showed good understanding of numbers as they counted in twos, and showed talent in their writing in 'bean diaries.' Children play and work independently. Adult support is timely and effectively extends children's knowledge and understanding of, for example, the habits of snails and other mini-beasts. Assessment effectively balances focused observations in adult-led activities with observations of children at play. Children are well cared for. Good support and coaching for new staff and a clear vision for developments to the Foundation Stage are impressive features of the Foundation Stage leader's good leadership and management.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils are more engaged and actively involved in their learning.
- Ensure that leadership of the school acts more promptly to identify and support pupils likely to underachieve.
- Provide the Foundation Stage with a well resourced and equipped outdoor area so that children have full access to all areas of learning inside and outside.

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**

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils generally leave Reception with standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. They make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. This represents satisfactory achievement throughout their time in school. In 2007, results from national tests showed that by the end of Year 2, pupils reached standards that were in line with national norms in reading and a little below in writing and mathematics. Year 6 results in national tests in English, mathematics and science for 2007 were a little above average. For these pupils, this showed satisfactory progress from their starting points in Reception. In 2007, the school met all its targets apart from that relating to the number of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics. Attainment in all three subjects has risen faster than the national trend in the last two years following a dip in 2005. Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys because they start from a higher baseline; their rate of progress is similar. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. School data suggests that although standards have dipped a little for Year 6 pupils, current challenging targets for all pupils are likely to be met.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well, and show good attitudes to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. Pupils show a good sense of right and wrong, get on well together and have high levels of confidence. However, spiritual development is not as strong. Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is above average and many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities and talk warmly about how

much they enjoy lessons. They have a good knowledge of the need for healthy lifestyles through the effective provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils act safely and sensibly and behaviour is good. Pupils make a highly positive contribution to the community. They deliver parcels within the local community at Christmas and put on shows. The school council equips pupils well for their roles in later life. For most pupils preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory rather than good, because pupils leave school with basic skills that are in line with expectation.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In good lessons, pupils' work is well matched to their capabilities and as a result they progress well. For example, younger pupils use equipment effectively to enable them to add numbers. Lessons are planned well, learning objectives are shared and outcomes are displayed and discussed. Pupils' misunderstandings are noticed and clarified using probing questioning and clear explanations, sometimes with the aid of the interactive whiteboard. Relationships are good and there is usually a lively pace. Pupils behave well and show good levels of co-operation. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, though variable, is satisfactory. Parents are very appreciative of the support their children receive. In less effective lessons, introductions are often dominated by the teacher talking for too long, and there is less engagement and active involvement of pupils. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is too brisk and sometimes pupils are unsure about their learning because too little time is given to reviewing what has been securely learned towards the end of lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met and the curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enriched by a wide range of activities such as residential outdoor weekends, visits to art galleries and by having visiting speakers and themed weeks such as the recent 'Africa' week. Pupils' personal development is effectively catered for in the well-structured personal, social, health and citizenship programme. A strength of this programme is the unit on relationships. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Whilst there is adequate provision for the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), some teachers do not do enough to promote these through other subjects. The use of thinking skills in lessons such as history and geography is improving provision in these areas. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including sports and drama, and these are well supported by pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Arrangements for child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place. Safeguarding meets requirements. Committed staff work hard to promote the personal development of pupils. The school's focus on improving attendance has resulted in above average attendance. Parents appreciate that school listens to and deals with their problems quickly and effectively. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for vulnerable pupils. A system for tracking academic

progress is in place. The system is new and is generally adequate, but information gathered is sometimes not acted upon quickly enough to stem underachievement. Whilst feedback to pupils is regular, it is not always made clear to them how to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has taken on board issues from the previous inspection and subject leaders now have more influence on improving their subject areas. Teachers are now making better use of assessment data in lesson planning. Teaching is monitored rigorously and targets set for pupils are challenging. However, there is too little emphasis on checking pupils' progress over time and ensuring that targets are being met so that pupils likely to underachieve are not always recognised or supported quickly enough. Staff absences have presented a considerable challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders. This has been an opportunity for some staff to develop leadership skills and the school has continued to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. However, there has been a negative impact on the achievement of some pupils, particularly in Year 6. Governors are committed and supportive of the school. They now hold the school to account adequately. The school has satisfactory links with partner institutions and offers satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 the learners' needs?	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

<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.

## Annex A

**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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bernard Gilpin Primary School, Sunderland, DH5 8DA

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and for talking to us about your school. We think your school provides you with a satisfactory education and has some good features. It was a pleasure to see how you got on so well together, and also how well behaved and polite you were. It was particularly impressive to see how talented and confident you were when entertaining your parents in the leavers' show. From the Reception classes to Year 6 you enjoy school. We know this because you told us so. It is also clear from your good attendance and the way you concentrate in lessons when the work is interesting. Your school is a safe place to be and you help by acting sensibly and trying to be healthy by not eating sweets and taking part in extra sport. You learn about being responsible well and are suitably prepared for your future. Your school council is taken seriously by everyone and certainly works in making your views known. Your personal qualities are good.

Your teachers are eager to make your school better. We have suggested that they might concentrate on three things to improve the school. One is to give you more opportunities to be actively involved in your learning. The second is to make sure that they watch closely for anyone falling behind in their work and make sure those pupils get the support they need to catch up quickly. The third thing is to improve the outdoor play facilities for the children who will be in the Reception classes in the future. You can certainly help with the first two by being enthusiastic and by keeping up your efforts to make sure that you keep working hard so that you achieve as well as you can.

Thank you again for your courtesy and friendliness. Our two days in your school were interesting and enjoyable. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Bannon

Lead inspector