

Grange Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108765
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	324831
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Frost 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	188
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	75
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Rutley
Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Wood
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Swan Street Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 1EA
Telephone number	0191 5535570
Fax number	0191 5535411

Age group	2–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average and the number of pupils on roll is declining. The area suffers from pockets of social and economic disadvantage. Double the national average of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school offers extended services and wrap-around childcare provision on site for 2-year-olds. The school holds the Healthy School Status and the Sports Activemark.

The school was last inspected in November 2007 when it was deemed to require a notice to improve. The school received a monitoring visit in June 2008 and at that time was judged to be making satisfactory progress towards the areas for improvement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires a Notice to Improve.

Grange Park Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. Through strong and determined leadership and cooperative team work, the staff and governors have acted swiftly to eradicate most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is now good as a direct result of the good care and guidance the school now offers its pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their education and that staff take care of them very well. They are well aware of how to keep themselves safe and incidents of bullying are very rare. Pupils are treated as individuals and there are programmes to support gifted and talented pupils, nurture groups for those with a learning difficulty and/ or disability. There is also a trained councillor on the staff who works with identified pupils or those who just want to 'drop in' for a chat. Pupils are involved in decision making within the school and are very proud of their school buildings and grounds and look after them well. Parents are also supportive of the schools' work and are very happy with the education their children receive.

Standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 are typically below average and achievement is satisfactory across the school in English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 6 have improved from very low in 2005 to near the national average 2007. In the latest 2008 tests, results dipped at the end of both key stages but nevertheless they represented satisfactory progress for these pupils from their very low starting points. Improved procedures to check the progress of individual pupils and groups is having an impact on identifying any underachievement in progress. Intervention strategies are helping pupils to catch-up to where they should be and pupils' progress has improved in reading and mathematics but is still weak in writing. The school data shows that current Year 6 and Year 2 pupils are on track to reach national averages.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; almost half is good. This good teaching is characterised by good questioning skills, a close match between pupils' abilities and activities, and effective use of teaching assistants to develop pupils' thinking and support their learning. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. In the satisfactory lessons assessment data is not used effectively enough to ensure that activities are pitched at the right level. Activities are sometimes too hard or too easy and pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Recent changes to curriculum planning are having a positive impact on increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. Pupils are also more aware of the links between different curriculum areas because their learning is increasingly based around a theme.

Leadership and management are satisfactory at all levels. The school is very aware of the needs of the local area and serves it well through the provision of childcare together with breakfast and after school clubs. The schools contribution to community cohesion locally is good but they have yet to develop more global awareness. The senior leadership team have had good success in raising all the teaching to a satisfactory or better level, and in improving pupils' entitlement to the curriculum. They have identified the correct areas for improvement and have placed a high emphasis on improving pupil progress through better teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation, however, is too generous and not focused enough on the actions which will have the most impact on standards and achievement. Consequently, it is difficult for leaders

to monitor the impact of their work. Governors are developing well and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They play a much greater part in the life of the school and are beginning to act as a critical friend and ask challenging questions about the schools' work. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Overall provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children benefit from a good start to their education. They usually enter Nursery with skills and abilities below those expected for their age, but more typical in their social and physical capabilities. Attainment on entry has been improving, especially for those who attend the childcare provision. At the end of Reception, standards have improved and are now broadly average. Physical skills and knowledge of the world are particularly strong but writing skills are underdeveloped.

With good, clear direction from the Early Years Foundation Staff leader, staff work successfully as a close-knit team to provide a welcoming, stimulating and safe environment. Scrupulous assessment of children's learning guides teachers' planning, activities are interesting and, mostly, children receive suitably challenging work. Consequently, children respond well and sustain good concentration. However, not all activities are linked tightly enough to the main areas of learning. Staff support children sensitively in their work, prompting them to explore new ideas. Children move freely between classroom activities and their 'outside' classroom.

Parents are pleased at how well their children settle and the quality of care. The school has done well to involve parents increasingly with their children's learning through workshops and guidance. Welfare arrangements are good; for example, the unit is checked each day, inside and out, to identify any health and safety issues. Staff know their children very well identifying any learning or personal needs early and to ensure appropriate solutions. The good childcare provision is an integral part of the main school. There is joint planning and many shared facilities which contribute to improved skills and knowledge on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage for many children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and especially writing across the school.
- Improve learning by ensuring that assessment data is used more effectively to plan a better match of work to pupil's learning needs.
- Strengthen self-evaluation procedures in order to ensure a clearer focus for school development

A small proportion of schools whose overall performance is judged to be 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

Attainment on entry varies from year-to-year but is generally below national expectations and in some year groups well below. Currently, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Historically pupils enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge below the expected level for their age, particularly in writing, and then make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 1 in

reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2 there has been an upward trend in attainment for a number of years, with pupils making satisfactory progress. The school has initiated good tracking procedures which are helping to identify pupils who are underachieving. Intervention packages and catch-up programmes are now in place and this data shows that pupils are making better progress across the school. Initiatives to raise attainment in reading, for example, introducing a daily reading session, have been particularly successful. A legacy of inadequate teaching and assessment however, has meant that many pupils are still catching up to where they should be. This better progress has not yet had time to impact on national tests at the end of Year 2 and 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils readily acquire good attitudes to learning and say that they enjoy lessons, although not all take enough care with their presentation. Attendance is broadly satisfactory although, the school has to work very hard, with some success, to improve the attendance of a small number of persistent absentees. Pupils get on well with one another in lessons and in the playground. Behaviour is good. Bullying and racial incidents are rare. Pupils feel safe and conduct themselves responsibly, thus ensuring the safety of others; an improvement since the last inspection. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and benefit from interesting cultural experiences especially through their singing. Growing links with countries, such as the USA and Jamaica, broaden their horizons. Consequently, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Through sport and an increasingly sensible diet, most pupils are adopting a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the more wholesome options at lunchtime. Pupils know that their voice matters and the school council has a small but important role in the school's development. Pupils develop a strong sense of community through links with older generations and the proximity of the Stadium of Light. Good life skills are learned by handling the business of the fruit tuck shop for example, but standards in basic skills mean that pupils' preparation for their future is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. The school has made improving teaching and learning a focus of their work. They have been successful in eradicating unsatisfactory teaching and around half of teaching is now good. This good teaching is characterised by good questioning skills, good use of skilled teaching assistants and using assessment data to plan activities that closely match the needs of all groups of pupils in the class. Teachers regularly assess pupils work and set individual targets for improvement. In the satisfactory lessons teachers are not using assessment effectively to plan activities which match pupils' learning needs. On these occasions some pupils fail to make as much progress as they could. The school has put measures in place to improve matters. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. There are good examples of comments which inform pupils of their next steps in learning. However, this is not consistent across all subjects.

Teaching assistants are often used very effectively to work with individuals and groups of pupils to support their learning needs. Teaching assistants also work with 'nurture' groups and small

groups of gifted and talented pupils. The school has yet to fully analyse the effectiveness of this provision.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school rightly places emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy. It is trialling a fresh approach of combining other subjects in order to develop writing skills, although the school has yet to evaluate its impact on other subjects. Teachers enrich the curriculum well through a variety of activities, such as visits to Eden Camp, and specialist visitors; for example footballers from Sunderland Football Club. The range of specialist rooms and resources, including an allotment, are impressive. Other clubs are plentiful and well attended.

The school has done well to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those using English as an additional language access the whole curriculum. Sensitive support by staff ensures that vital learning is not missed, as well as helping these pupils to reduce their barriers to learning. Good provision for personal development has improved the behaviour of all pupils and heightened their awareness of personal safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Parents rightly praise the warm atmosphere, and pupils appreciate that staff know them well and are approachable at all times. Support for individual problems is skilfully dealt with through nurture groups, counselling or by an understanding word. The school makes good use of external agencies to provide additional expertise. Procedures for promoting attendance are good but the school's good efforts have not succeeded in improving the absence rate above satisfactory. Safeguarding procedures are very thorough, including all aspects of health and safety, risk assessment and child protection. All staff have had first aid training.

Improving systems for monitoring pupil's academic progress enable teachers to identify and tackle underachievement, as well as setting helpful individual targets for literacy and numeracy

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has acted very positively to address the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Aply supported by the two assistant headteachers, she has developed procedures to improve pupils' progress, their care, guidance and support, and eradicate inadequate teaching. The leadership team works very well together and they support less experienced teachers who have taken on management roles, through an effective coaching model. The middle managers are new to their roles but they are very enthusiastic and their management skills are developing well. They have had access to relevant professional development programmes and support. The school has identified the right areas for development but the school self-evaluation document lacks a focus on the actions which will have the most impact on raising standards and achievement. This makes it difficult for the leaders and managers of the school to accurately evaluate the rate of improvement. There have been many new additions to the governing body and they bring relevant and varied experiences. They now carry out their statutory duties

satisfactorily. Governors have a much clearer view of their responsibilities, visit school regularly, and are starting to hold the school to account for 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.

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange Park Primary School, Sunderland, SR5 1EA

Thank you so much for the way you welcomed Mr Scott and I to your school when we came to visit you recently to see how well you are doing. We were very impressed with how polite you all were in directing us around the school and opening doors for each other. As you already know your school was given a notice to improve a year ago because it was thought that some things were not good enough. We are pleased to tell you that we think your school is now satisfactory. Your personal development and well-being and the care, guidance and support your teachers and teaching assistants give you are good.

We were also very impressed with how well you all get along together and how much you all enjoy school and take a pride in it. You are lucky to have so much space and you all appreciate it and use it well.

We have asked your headteacher and the governors to keep improving some things such as the standards in English, especially your writing, and mathematics. We have also asked that all the teaching is like that of the best where you are all doing tasks which excite and challenge you to work hard and make good progress. The headteacher is also going to work with the staff to be very clear about what exactly will make the difference when they are planning actions that will improve your school even further.

You told us how much you enjoy coming to school but some of you don't attend as regularly as you should. Try to come to school every day, and make as much effort as you can to improve the way you present your work in books.

I wish you all the best of luck for the future

Yours sincerely

Joy Frost

Her Majesty's Inspector