

Grindon Infant School

Gleneagles Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR4 9QN

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching, particularly in Year 1, sometimes expects too little of pupils and does not have a sharp enough focus on raising achievement in lessons.
- Improvements in the richness of the curriculum are not consistently adapted to match the abilities and needs of pupils, especially the more able.
- In mathematics, opportunities are sometimes missed to allow pupils to practise applying their skills in practical problem-solving situations.
- Despite good moral, social and cultural development, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own learning experiences.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not always provide sufficient time for pupils to think for themselves, explain their ideas and develop their independent learning skills.
- Although senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, monitoring and self-evaluation are not sharply and consistently focused on the impact of actions taken to improve learning and boost achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment in writing has been considerably improved and is now close to exceeding the national average.
- Good and sometimes inspiring teaching in Year 2 accelerates progress, quickly closing gaps so that attainment by the end of the key stage is broadly average overall.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils are happy, feel safe and behave well in classrooms and at social times.
- Senior leaders have established a firm focus on improving attendance and reducing persistent absence appreciably. The rejuvenated, well-led governing body effectively challenges and holds the school to account in positive and constructive ways.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons and support sessions.
- The inspection team held discussions with pupils, parents, members of the governing body, school staff, including senior leaders and middle managers, and the local authority support and intervention officer.
- No responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available in the planning of the inspection.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation including the school’s own records of pupils’ current progress, monitoring and evaluation documentation and records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grindon is a smaller-than-average- sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- Those supported at school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs is over half the average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with none at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The school extends its services in that there is a breakfast club each day.
- Since the previous inspection, a new Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body have been appointed

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils' progress is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - making certain that rigorous use is made of assessment to adapt activities to closely match the abilities and needs of pupils in all lessons, particularly in Year 1
 - extending the opportunities in all subjects for pupils to practise their numeracy skills
 - increasing pupils' confidence to answer questions fully, explain their ideas and justify their reasoning, especially for those more-able pupils
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning, develop their own thinking and improve their problem-solving skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of senior leaders in making certain that all teaching is at least good by:
 - ensuring that more is expected of pupils in lessons regardless of their ability and background
 - building upon the imaginative and thought-provoking practice that exists in the school
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring and recording the impact of school-improvement priorities to improve the quality of learning
 - improving the sharpness and quality of self-evaluation to make certain that actions taken have the intended impact on the rate of pupils' progress and achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although the school has made positive improvements since the previous inspection, pupils' progress and achievement is variable in different classes and subjects. Consequently, overall achievement requires improvement, including for those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. However, the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills below those typical for their age; speech and language development is significantly weaker. Children make good progress in their social and emotional development as they settle quickly and confidently into classroom routines. Rates of progress are quickening in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but are a little uneven because challenge and pace in children's learning is not always consistently sustained.
- Progress in Year 1 is at times limited because expectations are not demanding enough and activities are not consistently tailored to match the range of pupils' abilities, needs and interests. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use questioning to probe their thinking and understanding. In Year 2, progress accelerates quickly and is good. Unvalidated 2012 information shows that attainment at the end of this key stage is rising modestly and is broadly average overall, with attainment in English consistently higher than in mathematics. This is the result of the effective action taken to improve pupils' writing skills.
- Older pupils are increasingly confident and proficient in using more-complex skills, such as when describing the characteristics of a tropical rainforest and its wildlife. Sometimes opportunities are missed to demand fuller explanations, using ever more elaborate language, especially of the more-able pupils.
- Increasingly fascinating first-hand experiences, such as meeting Captain Jack Sparrow and his mate, stimulate pupils' interest and capture their imagination. Occasionally, good opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect, learn independently or work collaboratively with a partner, but these approaches are not well enough established in all lessons.
- A coordinated approach to teaching letter and sound relationships and making sense of new words is fostering reading skills well. However, attainment in reading by the age of six is below and sometimes well below that typical for their age. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress as their needs are identified early, work is well-matched to their individual needs and intervention and support effective.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Even though the quality of teaching is improving steadily, it requires improvement because expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and the challenge and pace in lessons are too variable. Staff enjoy good relationships with pupils and are always encouraging, but approaches do not always enthuse or excite pupils enough to promote extended thinking and understanding. Consequently, not all pupils are effectively stimulated and challenged enough.
- Progress is fastest when:
 - learning objectives are clearly understood by pupils and teaching continually builds on their prior learning
 - accurate assessment ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve
 - teachers actively ensure that all pupils enjoy their learning and concentrate for long periods.
- When teaching does not consistently enable pupils to learn well and progress quickly:
 - lesson planning lacks detail for the different ability groups to progress at an appropriate pace
 - expectations of what pupils can learn and achieve are not constantly stretching pupils' thinking and understanding
 - questioning does not relentlessly check pupils' pace of progress or identify gaps in their

knowledge and understanding

- lessons involve too much 'teacher talk' resulting in a modest pace, pupils' attention slips and opportunities are missed to reinforce resilience and hard work.
- Older pupils are given good opportunities to work independently and share their thinking with a partner, such as when applying their skills to solve problems. However, this not a consistent feature of learning throughout the school. The positive engagement of parents by staff contributes well to the good achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Increasingly, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, parents are involved in their children's learning and development adding to the efforts to raise aspirations and self-esteem.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good behaviour and friendly attitudes help to promote a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils are attentive and typically respond well to staff guidance and the systems used to manage their behaviour. Staff make effective use of praise to encourage positive attitudes and make certain that all are included and have the opportunity to achieve success.
- Pupils report that they feel safe, secure and happy in school. Parents agree. Pupils display a good sense of how to stay safe and are knowledgeable about risk and danger for their age. They display a good grasp of what constitutes bullying and display high levels of confidence that staff will quickly resolve any anxiety or worry.
- Occasionally, younger pupils became fidgety when activities are mundane or when routines are drawn out. While pupils' whole-hearted attitudes make a positive contribution to their learning, classroom routines such as sharing, listening to each other and taking turns are not always firmly enough embedded. At social times pupils are usually considerate, safety conscious and sensible.
- The school promotes the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality well. This has led to a marked reduction in persistent absence. Attendance is now average with an increasing proportion of pupils achieving an above average pattern. The well-organised and managed breakfast club makes a positive contribution to the good quality of pupils' care and support.
- Arrangements to support children whose needs are sometimes complex and make them potentially vulnerable are effective. This includes targeted use of specialist support agencies. Parents appreciate the good quality of care that school staff provide. A very small minority of parents who expressed a view felt that the school could do more to make sure pupils are consistently well behaved.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers are making encouraging progress improving the school. For example, governance has been improved considerably and behaviour and attendance is much improved. Improvements in the quality of learning, such as in pupils' writing, are evident in the regular gains in achievement and attainment, although securing a rapid pace of change is not helped by unsettled staffing. Middle leaders are increasingly confident in driving and sustaining improvement in their areas of responsibility. The positive tackling of weaknesses demonstrates sufficient capacity to continue to improve.
- The purposeful leadership of the headteacher gives direction for the school's continued improvement, but the drive for change is not always decisive enough. Senior leaders have an increasingly accurate grasp of school strengths and areas for improvement. However, at times there is insufficient rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of initiatives to secure a more rapid and sustained pattern of faster progress and improved achievement in lessons.
- Teaching is competently led. Professional development programmes are well managed to

promote the enriching of essential staff skills to tackle school priorities. This includes support for newly qualified teachers. Performance management practice is increasingly targeted to secure a more consistent pattern of good teaching.

- The more imaginative approaches to learning that are increasingly in place provide relevant, interesting first-hand experiences with a firm emphasis on improving speech, language and number skills. Yet, not all teachers have fully adopted the flexible and creative opportunities to the teaching of these skills, especially in mathematics.
 - A good range of extracurricular activities is provided which adds to the enjoyment of pupils' learning. This contributes well to the good moral, social and cultural development. Yet opportunities are sometimes missed to enhance their spiritual development, capitalising on the pupils' enjoyment, fascination and curiosity in learning about themselves and the world around them.
 - The good provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures pupils of all backgrounds, including those potentially vulnerable, experience all aspects of school life. Staff work effectively to promote equality of opportunity making certain all obstacles to learning and discrimination are eliminated.
 - The school engages parents well, including those who are sometimes hard to reach. In conversations, parents appreciate the opportunities to improve their own skills to support their children's learning. However, a very few parents express the view that their worries and concerns are not always consistently addressed by the school.
 - Safeguarding requirements are met with much good practice underpinning the good quality of care and support provided for the pupils.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - increasingly challenges and holds the school to account in positive ways
 - demonstrates a strong commitment to driving school improvement rigorously
 - uses performance management to inject pace in the pattern and speed of improvement
 - appreciate the value of external review and evaluation and work positively with the local authority that provides light touch support for the school.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108766
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	401010

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Welsh
Headteacher	Joan Adamson
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2010
Telephone number	0191 5536865
Fax number	0191 5536871
Email address	grindon.infant@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

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