

Grange Primary School

Owton Manor Lane, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS25 3PU

Inspection dates 30 April 2013-1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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

- The progress pupils make in English and mathematics has not been rapid enough and so pupils' achievement is not yet good. This is particularly the case in relation to writing.
- The quality of teaching over time has been too variable. As a result, pupils have not made enough progress for achievement to be good overall.
- Senior leaders and governors have not yet had time to ensure that leaders in charge of subjects and areas, particularly those new to role, have been enabled to fully develop their leadership skills in order to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and standards, for example through checking information on pupils' progress.
- Pupils are not always provided with clear personal targets that link closely to the work that they are doing.
- Teachers' use of questioning does not always provide opportunities for pupils to be stretched and challenged to extend their understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils feel safe in school and are well looked after. They aspire to the school's motto, 'Be the best you can be'.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is well supported by the school's curriculum and the range of activities it offers.
- The school is strongly committed to supporting pupils with a wide range of special educational needs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons and looked at work in pupils' books. They listened to pupils read, visited an assembly and observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, seven members of the governing body, members of the senior staff, a representative of the local authority and with pupils.
- Documents examined included the school's self-evaluation summary, the school development plan, information on pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding, school management and the curriculum. Inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 16 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), meeting parents on the playground and the school's most recent survey of parents' views. The inspection team also considered 23 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pauline Piddington	Additional Inspector
Kate Pringle	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There has been a significant period of turbulence in the staffing complement of the school due to the large number of staffing changes since the last inspection.
- The acting headteacher, who is the substantive deputy headteacher, had only been in post since the beginning of the summer term at the time of the inspection.
- The newly appointed headteacher takes up post in September.
- The school provides places for pupils with specific physical and medical difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and those from service families.
- The majority of pupils come from White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is also above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved a range of awards including the Healthy School Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the International Schools Award and Activemark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and results in pupils making faster progress by:
 - making sure that teachers set personalised targets for pupils that are linked to the activities they are currently working on so that they are able to identify more clearly what they must do to improve their work, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers' use of questioning to assess and extend learning during lessons provides greater challenge to pupils
 - sharing the best practice in the use of additional teaching assistant support to ensure maximum benefit from this valuable resource.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders and governors make sure that middle leaders, especially those new to role, have opportunities to refine and develop their leadership skills so that they have a positive impact on improving teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of contexts and to practise their skills in different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' achievement has not been good enough. The proportion of pupils making the expected progress is still slightly below national averages, although inspection evidence confirms that pupils' progress is now accelerating across the school. Attainment, however, remains below national averages, particularly in writing.
- Children make a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many start with skills below and often well below those expected for their age. This varies from year to year. Children make good progress at this stage but standards are still below national averages by the time they enter Year 1.
- The school's current information on achievement is increasingly robust and accurate. Information on the progress of pupils is now being used more effectively to identify those pupils who may need extra support or additional challenge to stretch them. Pupil progress meetings are held regularly with members of the senior leadership team to ensure the progress of specific groups of learners is closely checked. Subject leaders, however, are not yet fully involved in this process.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is generally in line with that of other pupils. Those pupils with more specific needs are integrated into the mainstream classes for part of the day, depending on their personal needs. Although attainment for some of these pupils is much lower, their progress is in line with that of other pupils.
- Pupils in receipt of additional support through the pupil premium funding increasingly make similar progress to other pupils. The effectiveness of in-class support and small-group work is checked closely to make sure that outcomes for these pupils are improving. Results from national assessment tests indicate that attainment for pupils in receipt of additional funding was around one and a half terms behind in English and mathematics when compared with other pupils.
- The systematic teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) helps most pupils to learn to read quickly and accurately. Pupils' performance in last year's phonics screening check showed that by the end of Year 1 pupils' skills were above average. Phonics lessons are well organised and structured to enable pupils to work at their own level. Pupils enjoy reading. They were able to express clear views about which authors they preferred and why.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been good enough. Since the last inspection there have been a significant number of changes in staffing and this has led to a period of disruption which has also affected progress. There are signs, however, that the quality of teaching is improving and is now more consistently good.
- Classrooms are well organised and stimulating and there are good relationships between adults and pupils. In the best lessons teachers make good use of 'learning partners' where pupils talk together to share their ideas. This shared working helps them to clarify their thinking and rehearse their ideas before writing.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects to enable them to develop their writing skills further.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective because of the ways in which adults offer a wide variety of stimulating resources, plan for individual needs and balance learning carefully between focused tasks and activities children select for themselves. A good example of how exciting this learning is for pupils was seen in the delight displayed by a small group of children who were re-enacting the story of Goldilocks using a number of puppets and a small puppet theatre.
- The best learning takes place when teachers have the highest expectations of learning and

behaviour. Teachers plan work that is at the right level of difficulty to challenge pupils and move their learning forward. In a very successful Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were challenged to identify different forms of writing. As a result of sharp questioning to take learning forward, pupils were highly motivated to engage in the activity. Such effective activities for stimulating writing are not consistently offered to pupils across the school, however.

- In less successful lessons teachers' questioning of pupils was not sufficiently focused. The pace of the lesson then slowed and so did the rate of learning.
- Marking in pupils' books is consistently good. It tells pupils what they need to do to improve and in the best examples pupils have opportunities to respond to these comments. However, pupils are not always given precise personal targets linked to the work they are doing. As a result, they do not always have a clear enough understanding of how they are to improve and how to make more rapid progress.
- There were good examples of teachers working very successfully with teaching assistants to support targeted groups of pupils to achieve well. However, this was not always the case and opportunities were on occasion missed for teaching assistants to support pupils and have a greater impact on learning.
- Teaching supports all groups of pupils, including those with physical and medical difficulties, to make progress in line with their peers. This serves to illustrate the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel that behaviour is good and this is confirmed by staff and parents. They state that they feel safe and well looked after. Only on rare occasions, when teaching is less stimulating, does pupils' attention wane. They are kind, polite and considerate to one another and to staff and visitors. This contributes significantly to the warm, harmonious atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils develop high aspirations and recognise that good behaviour leads to success. As one pupil stated, 'We get a good education here. The more we learn, the more we succeed in the future'.
- Pupils say that bullying in the school is rare and are confident that there are a range of adults to support them if they have a problem. They are aware of the different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- They relish the opportunity to take responsibility, for example in taking care of one another as librarians or as members of the school council.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and state that their children feel happy and safe.
- The school works very well, in a sympathetic manner, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils and families. It is particularly successful in working with a range of external agencies.
- Over recent years the school has worked hard with parents and outside agencies to improve the attendance of pupils. These efforts have been successful and attendance is now broadly average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Since the last inspection the school's leaders have not been able to secure consistent improvements to pupils' achievements in English and mathematics.
- Leaders of subject areas and other aspects of the school's work, some of whom are new to role, are beginning to have an impact in supporting senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, they have not as yet had sufficient time for this impact to be significant or to fully develop their own leadership skills.
- The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require improvement. Through rigorous self-review, staff training is now focused closely on improving the quality of teaching and this is beginning to have a positive impact.

- Pupils' progress is tracked systematically every three weeks through the analysis of information and meetings are held with staff to discuss teachers' assessments and to check if pupils are doing well enough.
- Effective appraisal and systems to check the performance of staff hold teachers to account for pupils' outcomes. Staff training and observations of teaching have helped to improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is at least good. Leaders review staff targets and salary progression is linked to performance targets being met. The school has the capacity to improve further.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. It is enhanced through subjects and the range of opportunities offered through the school's curriculum. A range of visits and visitors to school and good links with the community enrich learning. Older pupils welcome the opportunity of a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre.
- The local authority has provided good, focused support for the school during this period of staffing changes and weaker pupil performance.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are clearly determined to secure the necessary improvements to the school and are aware that they need to rigorously challenge senior leaders in relation to improving pupils' achievement. They know about the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils in relation to other schools and they are determined to take action to improve standards. For example, they have secured the services of a number of consultants to support school improvement. Governors are increasingly involved in the school through, for example, links with school subjects. The committee structure has been reviewed and a protocol for classroom visits has also recently been agreed. Governors have a clear understanding of the aims of the pupil premium funding, how it is being used and its impact. Training opportunities have been taken. They are aware of the link between salary and teachers' performance and support the senior leaders in tackling underperformance. The finances of the school are monitored carefully to ensure that funding is allocated effectively.

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	111661
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	411851

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	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Brown
Headteacher	Anne Hayes
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2010
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