

Grindon Infant School

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

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching is not always good enough. Too often tasks for pupils of different abilities begin at the same level of difficulty. For some the work is too hard and for others too easy and this limits the progress pupils make, especially for boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Instructions to pupils are not always clear enough about what they need to do in order to do well.
- Work in books is often untidy and the formation of letters and numbers is incorrect in many cases.
- Boys' performance is considerably below that of girls in reading and writing because they are not sufficiently stimulated to learn.
- Records kept by teachers showing how well pupils are doing do not match the records kept by leaders and so checks are unreliable.
- Leaders have an overly positive opinion about the school and its performance including the progress pupils make as they move through the school.
- There have been a number of recent changes to leadership at different levels. Some leaders are very new to role and so they have had little time to show developments in their areas of responsibility.
- Overall, the pace of improvement since the last inspection is not rapid enough.

The school has the following strengths

- There is a positive climate in classrooms and around school. Pupils work hard and are keen to please their teachers.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behaviour is good. They know who to turn to if they are worried and know that staff will help them.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have made good progress in mathematics to equal the standards of others in this subject.
- The recent focus to improve attendance is working with most recent information showing a rise compared to previous years.
- Well-trained teaching assistants provide effective support for groups of pupils.
- Staff are dedicated and eager to improve their skills. Recently developed links with a local school are providing good opportunities to engage with best practice.
- Leaders correctly identify the main areas of development for the school and plans to address these are clearly prioritised with timed actions to monitor progress towards these.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons and in addition made short visits to see small groups and individual pupils. They also listened to reading. The acting headteacher took part in observing a lesson jointly with the lead inspector.
- Separate discussions were held with the acting headteacher, staff, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of three members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, staff planning journals, data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation and information relating to the welfare of pupils and safeguarding.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to consider. Therefore, the inspectors took account of the views of parents gleaned from discussions with several parents during the two days of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and lunchtime, and attended an assembly.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Wylie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and therefore eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are of White British background.
- There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at schools action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning, which on inspection, was attended by nine pupils.
- An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are in place following the retirement of the previous headteacher in the summer term. They are in post until the new headteacher takes up post in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching, including within the early years, to be at least consistently good by:
 - making sure that the information about what pupils can do is accurate, well recorded and used effectively to inform future lessons
 - making sure instructions to pupils in lessons are clear so that pupils know what they need to do in order to learn well
 - making sure that pupils form their letters and numbers correctly and that staff help and encourage them to present their work neatly.
- Narrow the gap between the achievements of boys and girls by:
 - providing interesting and challenging activities that widen pupils' experiences and stimulate them to achieve more, especially for boys
 - making sure activities match the different learning abilities of pupils and include good challenge for them, including for the most able.
- Establish a system to gather and collate reliable information on pupils' achievement and use this over time to better identify actions to bring about continual improvement to teaching and learning by:
 - making sure that the information on the progress and attainment of pupils recorded by teachers is the same as that held by leaders so they have an accurate view of how well pupils are performing
 - ensuring leaders use this information to judge accurately about how well pupils are doing, and how well different groups perform, to compare progress and standards from year to year.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There have been a number of changes to leadership roles over recent months. In addition to the roles of headteacher and deputy, new literacy and mathematics leaders took up post in April and September this year and so they have not had time to make a significant difference to their areas of responsibility.
- In this small school, not all leaders have the necessary skills to check the performance of teachers and the outcomes of pupils. This shows in the inconsistencies in the information held about how well pupils are doing.
- Currently, there are too many differences between the records teachers use to track pupils' progress and the information held by the school centrally. In addition, leaders are not using the information on progress and attainment sufficiently well to monitor and compare progress over time for all pupils and different groups. Consequently, leaders' judgements about how well pupils are doing are overly positive and this affects decisions to improve learning.
- Expectations of the quality of teaching are not yet high enough. The need for a better match of skill to pupils' needs, such as questioning skills to develop pupils' thinking and responses, are not as advanced as they could be.
- An improvement can be seen in pupils' use of their mathematical skills across other subjects.
- The school's view of its own performance is overly generous. Although leaders recognise the strengths, they have not been critical enough in considering the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils, which in turn affect other judgements.
- A link is in place between the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and progression along the pay scale. There are expectations of performance in order to attain advancement in staff salaries.
- The school holds a lot of information about the progress pupils make and the standards they reach. Not all teachers use this information effectively enough to plan lessons which challenge the needs of different groups. This is shown in the variable progress made by some groups, including the most able, boys and, in some subjects, disadvantaged pupils.
- Since the last inspection and monitoring visit, there have been some improvements. Where identified areas have been addressed, for example, in the teaching of mathematics for disadvantaged pupils the school can show good improvement. However, standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average and show little sign of rising, largely due to the underperformance of boys.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to provide additional staffing and training. In mathematics, this enabled good progress and there is no gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school. In reading and writing, progress for this group shows the gap widening in 2014 compared to 2013 despite a range of support.
- Despite the variations of pupils' progress, the school shows a clear commitment to the inclusion of pupils. It makes every effort to ensure that pupils are happy in school and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The primary school sport funding has been delegated to support additional lunchtime and after-school activities. Sports coaches have been used to develop the teaching of physical education. The school is not yet measuring the impact of this funding on increased participation, quality of teaching and the health and well-being of pupils.
- The new curriculum is broad and balanced and has been developed in classes over the past year. Pupils are encouraged to experience the wider world and extend their skills through visits and visitors to the school. Pupils access a range of additional activities during lunchtime and after school, including hockey, dance and art.
- Work to implement national changes related to assessment of pupils within the new curriculum is at a very early stage.
- Personal and social development forms a strong thread through lessons to successfully extend pupils' skills in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority continues to support the school and is encouraging increased links with other schools of best practice. There is agreement with the inspection team that, presently, leadership is undergoing considerable change.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection and monitoring visit carried out by Her Majesty's Inspector, the governing body has reduced in size and is now at full complement. All members now take on individual roles and

responsibilities. They are very committed and highly supportive of the school and show increasing levels of challenge as their understanding of the different aspects of management develops. Governors recognise the strengths of the school and where improvements are required. They are working with senior leaders to achieve this. They are involved in the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, including pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, and understand the priorities identified in the school action plan.

- Governors are aware of how the additional pupil premium funding is allocated. They understand the improvements identified by the school for disadvantaged pupils but do not yet keep a close enough eye upon how well the gaps are narrowing in reading, writing and mathematics from year to year. Governors are aware of the allocated funding for primary sports but are less sure of how it has been used and what impact it has had upon pupils' health, activity rates or the quality of teaching of physical education. Governors are increasingly rigorous in linking teachers' performance to pay and monitor this closely. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding including the training of staff to keep pupils safe from harm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in class and around the school and are encouraged to be thoughtful, considerate and care for others. They share and take turns as they work and play together.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They show a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe both in school and at home. School works well to help them learn about the dangers that exist and help pupils to learn about safe places to play and dangerous situations. Because of their good relationships with staff, pupils readily take their cares and concerns to them because, as they say, 'they are always ready to help you'.
- Pupils believe behaviour in the school to be good. They say that there are few instances of bad behaviour because everyone understands the rules of the school and the consequences of bad behaviour through the traffic light system.
- When poor behaviour does occur, pupils say that staff address it quickly and effectively. Although exclusion has been used in the past, there have been no exclusions for the last three years.
- Attendance is average. Most pupils have good attendance but there is some persistent absenteeism. The school now has rigorous procedures in place and attendance for the three weeks of the autumn term is already showing improvement.
- Parents believe that their children are safe, well looked after and that behaviour is managed well. Inspectors agree with their views.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. They try their best to achieve what is asked of them and many show considerable resilience as they endeavour to understand what is required of them.
- Teaching requires improvement because work provided for pupils does not always help them to achieve as well as they might. This is because pupils are not told or show well enough what to do in a particular task. Too often there is insufficient discussion and this limits understanding of what is required and what pupils are expected to achieve.
- Although there is regular assessment, best use is not made of pupils' understanding to set work at the right level in order to build on previous achievements. Not enough is expected of pupils and so not all groups make the best progress possible.
- During lessons, opportunities to move pupils onto harder tasks as soon as they are ready are missed and so progress slows. This is particularly true for the most able pupils and so too few of them achieve above average standards.
- For other groups, including boys and disadvantaged pupils, there is not enough action to support specific needs at the right levels. The current rate of progress for these pupils in reading and writing is not enough for them to catch up to others in the year group.
- Work is marked regularly and sometimes there are opportunities for pupils to return to the work and learn from their mistakes. However, this does not happen enough and there is a tendency to go on to the next piece of work without reference to past errors.

- Pupils enjoy school and settle quickly to tasks and they cooperate and collaborate well together. In a literacy lesson about having 'a different viewpoint', pupils considered what they could see of a play park from where they were sitting. Discussion considered points of similarity and differences before they used this skill in their debate of whether the three little pigs should help the wolf after his behaviour towards them. This is a good example of how the school teaches pupils to be tolerant of those with views different from their own.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and many have their own specialisms. They use their skills successfully in class to help pupils to understand and learn. They contribute greatly to pupils' progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over Key Stage 1, pupils make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics leaving Year 2 with standards in line with the national average.
- Boys consistently achieve significantly below girls in all subjects over time. The school leader for literacy has begun to address this through the purchase of books to stimulate boys' interest but it is too early to evaluate any impact on boys' achievement. .
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in mathematics and now reach a similar standard to other pupils in the school. In reading and writing, there has not been such a positive result as the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils has widened in 2014. Disadvantaged pupils are about a term behind all pupils in these areas compared to the national average.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently well and this limits their progress to higher levels of performance, especially in writing. Overall most able pupils make expected progress rather than good.
- Pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs now make broadly similar progress to other pupils overall. Over time there has been variability from year to year depending upon the level of support these pupils receive in class. Presently, pupils supported through school action are making good progress compared to those at the higher level of need known as school action plus.
- Information from the phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) screening checks carried out on pupils at the end of Year 1 in 2013 and 2014 indicate that those pupils reached higher levels than the national average. However, work in books does not reflect these higher standards with spelling appearing to be at the expected level.
- Throughout the school, presentation is untidy with letters and numbers poorly formed.
- Reading is strongest of the three subjects. Pupils attempt to sound out new words using their developing phonic skills. Those more secure in their reading are able to discuss the story and anticipate what might happen next. An effective sharing of reading with parents is in place with parents recording their comments as to how well their children read and where they are struggling..

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter the early years at levels broadly typical for their age. For some, however, their level of communication is lower than usually found because of difficulties with speaking and listening. By the time, they move to Year 1, most children are working at the expected levels for their age. Overall, children in the early years make the progress expected of them.
- Children quickly settle in the Nursery and become confident in their surroundings. They form comfortable relationships with their teachers who work closely with them to develop their personal, social and emotional skills.
- Despite being early in the school year, at the time of the inspection, children already understood daily routines. Behaviour is good. Children share and take turns as they use apparatus indoors and outside.
- A proportion of children start in the early years with lower than what is typical for this age in speaking and listening skills and staff make considerable efforts to extend children's language and vocabulary and so they make good progress in this area of learning.
- Good support is quickly put in place to support the individual needs of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Children are ready to learn. Presently there are too few opportunities for them to explore and investigate for themselves, which limits their experience in using their developing skills and knowledge. In addition, both indoor and outdoor areas do not provide enough opportunities for using new skills in reading, writing and number.

- The teaching of phonics has been slow to start in the Reception class and insufficient attention is paid to the correct formation of letters and numbers.
- Although staff make regular assessments of children’s abilities, this information is not yet used well enough to inform planning for what children need to learn next. This means that levels of challenge do not always meet the needs of children, especially for the most able.
- Information which tracks children’s progress through the early years is inconsistent. This means that any analysis by senior leaders of the development of children on entry to and exit from the early years is unreliable and cannot, therefore, securely identify where improvement is needed.
- The leadership of the early years requires improvement to secure assessment for children in order that children’s abilities are understood well and their next steps in learning can be swiftly addressed in order to quicken progress.

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	442229

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Welsh
Headteacher	Eleanor Robson
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2012
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