



Grasvenor Avenue Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101284
Local Authority Barnet
Inspection number 286019
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Grasvenor Avenue
School category	Community		Barnet
Age range of pupils	4–7		EN5 2BY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02084496053
Number on roll (school)	54	Fax number	02084496053
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	
		Headteacher	Miss Georgina Alston
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006	Inspection number 286019
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than average. Numbers have declined in recent years and pupils are unevenly distributed amongst the three single age classes. The majority are in Year 2, with much smaller numbers in Foundation and Year 1. The school serves a mixed community, mainly from the immediate area. Around two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is higher than average. The new Foundation intake began school on the second day of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents and their children are rightly very proud of the school because it provides a good quality of education and is outstanding in some respects. The inspector agrees with one parent who represented the views of many by commenting that the school creates 'a warm, happy and caring environment'. As a result, children develop confidence and thrive. They achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is flexible enough to ensure that it provides successfully for pupils with a wide range of needs. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly in 2006 and were above average. Pupils develop good basic skills, including a ready facility with information and communications technology (ICT), which prepares them well for the junior school and the world beyond. Some more able pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.

Standards and achievement have improved because the school is committed to ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can. This drive for continuous improvement is promoted through the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team and governing body. Very effective procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils are in place, which enable additional support to be provided where necessary. The school knows itself well and implements effective strategies when weaknesses are identified. This is well illustrated by provision in the Foundation Stage. Identified as a weakness at the last inspection, significant improvements in teaching and the curriculum have transformed it into a strength of the school. As a result, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, which forms a solid platform for their future learning.

The very supportive ethos of the school ensures that the care and guidance of pupils is outstanding. As a result, pupils' personal development is strong. They behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy their education, although attendance remains below average despite the best efforts of the school. Outstanding features of their personal development are the way they embrace the many opportunities the school provides for them to adopt healthy lifestyles and to contribute to the school and wider communities. The 'take ten' daily exercise sessions, for example, are entered into enthusiastically by both staff and pupils. Indeed, pupils take full advantage of the impressive range of clubs provided by staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Ensure that more able pupils achieve as well as they can in writing.
- * Work with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children arrive at school with a range of skills and understanding which vary from year to year but are broadly average overall. They

become confident learners and make good progress through the Foundation Stage. Most reach the goals set for children of that age and some exceed them.

Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school because the teaching is good and regular assessments ensure that effective support is given to pupils at risk of underachieving. As a result, almost all pupils reach the challenging targets that have been set for them. They are now reaching above average standards. Many exceed their targets in reading and mathematics. Fewer do so in writing and some more able pupils do not do as well in writing.

Pupils with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English are supported very effectively and make good progress as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are? good. They are very proud of their school and this was evident when they sang the school song with gusto and feeling in assembly as part of 'the circle of friends'. Pupils enjoy everything that the school has to offer and most attend the after school activities on offer. Nevertheless, their attendance has declined again after several years of improvement and remains below average. The school uses a variety of strategies to encourage good attendance but these have not been fully successful.

Pupils' knowledge of the components of a healthy lifestyle is impressive. Many are aware that they 'need to run around to stay fit and healthy' and that exercise 'makes your heart beat faster'. All pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, contribute to the work of the school council which has been responsible, for example, for reviewing lunchtime arrangements and securing more playground equipment. At a wider level they raise money for a variety of charities and take part in a wide range of community events. They are well aware of how to keep themselves safe and know, for example, that the proposed pond will require a fence 'to stop children falling in and drowning'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and ensures that pupils make good progress. Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of all the pupils in their classes. They work in close partnership with a highly effective team of teaching assistants who make an invaluable contribution to the quality of education, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff enjoy excellent relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. They also use a variety of effective strategies, including ICT, to engage and motivate pupils. As a result, pupils

are generally well behaved and fully engaged in lessons. Occasionally, they lose focus when they are asked to sit for too long without an opportunity to contribute to the lesson. A strong feature of the teaching is the use of assessment. The good systems in place ensure that teachers know exactly where pupils are and what they need to do next in order to improve. They are also developing good systems for pupils to review and assess their own work, for example in ICT lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and allows pupils to achieve well and to enjoy their education. Provision for basic skills is good and those who are experiencing difficulties are helped through a variety of effective support. The school is using a range of strategies to improve the achievement of more able pupils in writing, although the impact has yet to be felt in terms of test results. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is now a strength of the school. It provides an exciting and practical curriculum which allows the children to become confident learners. The outside area, in particular, has been developed particularly successfully for a range of activities come rain or shine! ICT is firmly embedded in the curriculum and is used effectively to support pupils' learning in many subjects. The curriculum is enriched in a variety of ways. In addition to the clubs, visits and visitors are a regular feature of school life and pupils' creativity and enjoyment is promoted through focused weeks on the arts, books and healthy living for example.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff know the children and their families extremely well and the supportive and caring ethos of the school ensures that pupils' personal development and well being are priorities for all. It also creates confident learners who achieve well. Pupils' personal and academic development is monitored very closely and very good assessment systems ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can in most aspects of their learning. The school has close liaison with a wide range of outside agencies to help them meet the needs of their children. The school enjoys an excellent partnership with parents and one commented 'all staff work hard with the children to create a strong feeling of community which encourages learning and good behaviour'. A new development is the Breakfast Club which extends the range of care on offer for families.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and contribute very effectively to pupils' good personal development and achievement. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and has led to significant improvements since the last inspection. She is held in high regard by staff, governors and parents. One commented 'The school is exceedingly well led by a very organised leader who is always very approachable'. She

has created an ethos of teamwork and all staff work very effectively together to bring about improvements. Governors are very effective and involved and provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to the school.

Good processes for self-evaluation are used to confirm strengths and to put in place effective strategies for improvement where weaknesses have been identified. Improvements in the Foundation Stage and more recently in pupils' achievement in mathematics are good examples, although strategies to improve the achievement of more able pupils in writing have yet to be fully successful. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly by the senior team and this ensures that the quality of teaching is maintained and improved. The school has successfully addressed most of the issues from the last inspection and this, together with the drive and enthusiasm of staff and governors, gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

I am writing to thank you all for making me so welcome when I came to your school a few days ago. I really enjoyed my time at Grasvenor Avenue and you helped me by being so friendly and keen to talk to me. I thought you would like to know what I found out.

You and your parents are very proud of your school and you are right to be because it is a good school. You really enjoy everything you do at school and feel safe and happy because all the adults look after you so well. I was really pleased when you asked me to join your circle of friends. Your behaviour was good and most of you worked hard in lessons. You get on well at school because the teachers and other adults help you to learn and there are lots of fun things for you to do. Those of you who find things a little bit more difficult are given plenty of help. You get better and better at reading, writing and maths as you move through the school. I was also impressed by how well you use the computers.

Your headteacher is doing a really good job and all the other staff and governors are working really well as a team to help her. I have asked them to do two things to help make things even better for you. I would like some of you good writers to do even better and the teachers are already doing things to help with this. You can help a lot with the second one. We have also asked the school to work with your parents to make sure that you come to school all the time, except when you are ill, so that you learn as much as you can.

I wish you all the very best of luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector