



Greenside Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108348
Local Authority Gateshead
Inspection number 288072
Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006
Reporting inspector Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rockwood Hill Road
School category	Community		Greenside, Ryton
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, NE40 4AX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 413 2186
Number on roll (school)	140	Fax number	0191 413 9619
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr J Graham
		Headteacher	Mrs E Newton
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	21–22 September 2006	288072

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and the number on roll has declined significantly because of falling rolls generally in the area, and because some parents have transferred their children to other schools. All children are from White British backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of children that are eligible for free school meals is below average, as are the proportions of children who have learning difficulties and disabilities or a Statement of Special Educational Need. When children start school, they have attainment that is below what is typical for their age.

The school has been severely affected by staff absence in the last two years, including that of the headteacher and senior teachers. There have been three acting headteachers in the last year and the school has needed considerable support from the local authority. In June of this year, the full governing body resigned and has been replaced by a new governing body appointed by the local authority. At the start of this term, the local authority arranged for an experienced headteacher to take over temporary leadership of the school. Three newly qualified teachers were appointed to the school this term amounting to half of the full-time teaching staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The absence of key managers over a long period has undermined the school's effectiveness. Therefore, the school has had considerable support from the local authority in the last two years - including the appointment of a part-time acting headteacher in the last school year - and lacks the capacity to improve without external help. The appointment for this term of a highly skilled and determined acting headteacher has succeeded in stabilising the school after a turbulent year. Since the start of term, she has overcome many difficulties, provided a clear direction for improvement and has ensured that teaching and learning are effectively planned and that the curriculum now meets all requirements. Parents and children comment on the much-improved calm and orderly atmosphere in the school since the start of term.

Standards are below average; achievement is variable across the school and overall it is inadequate. Performance in national tests in the last four years shows that pupils have often made too little progress during their time in Years 3 to 6. The inadequate achievement directly reflects the uneven quality of teaching and learning, which is also inadequate overall. In the Foundation Stage, children do not make enough progress in their learning of language and communication or mathematical skills; so that by the time they enter Year 1 most children have not reached all of the goals set for their learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils consistently make satisfactory progress and are now working at the standard expected for their age because most can work independently and enjoy their learning. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' standards and the quality of learning show considerable variation. In Years 4, 5 and 6 there is much underachievement as a result of frequent changes of teachers last year and low expectations of what pupils were expected to achieve. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are still underachieving this term because teaching is not effective in setting tasks that help pupils of different abilities to improve. In these classes, pupils show little independence or enjoyment of learning and there are still incidents of poor behaviour that have been eradicated elsewhere in the school. In Year 6, while standards are lower than they should be, pupils have made satisfactory progress this term but still have some way to go to make up for lost ground. In Year 3, pupils are progressing satisfactorily from their performance in national tests, where they reached standards broadly in line with those expected nationally.

Pupils have responded well to the stability in the school this term, so that their personal development, including their behaviour, is satisfactory. This is because the majority are beginning to enjoy better teaching and a curriculum which allows them to enjoy and succeed with their learning. Older pupils, who have been taught by numerous temporary teachers during their time at Greenside, appreciate having the same teacher each day since the start of term. They said, "You know what to expect and can ask for help." Warm and trusting relationships are beginning to develop because the

headteacher has very quickly won the support of staff and established good teamwork and a commitment to what the school needs to do to raise standards. These relationships are giving pupils the confidence to volunteer for responsibilities and to feel that they can play a bigger role in helping to improve the school. The care of pupils is satisfactory, but guidance for learning is inadequate because teachers new to the school do not have enough information about pupils' prior learning to overcome the gaps that still exist and to set realistic and challenging targets.

Apart from the exceptional skills of the acting headteacher, leadership and management in the school are inadequate. Senior managers' impact on raising standards in the last two years has been ineffective. The leadership structure is extremely fragile. Following the recent resignation of the headteacher, the governing body intends to appoint a headteacher to take up post from January 2007. The governance of the school is of unknown quality since the new governing body has yet to meet. Parents' responses show that many are aware the school is in a very vulnerable position. While they value the good start made this term, they are apprehensive about how the school will manage when the acting headteacher leaves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in all subjects.
- Establish clear and effective leadership at all levels to raise standards and improve the quality of educational provision.
- Develop the skills of the new governing body so they can monitor the work of the school effectively, set a clear and achievable plan for improvement and hold all staff accountable for standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Overall, standards are below average and achievement is inadequate.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been below the national average and declining in recent years, especially in writing and mathematics. Performance in national tests in the last four years shows that pupils have often made too little progress and underachieved during their time in the juniors. Boys achieved better results than girls. Results for Year 6 in the 2006 tests were an improvement on the previous year, especially in reading and mathematics. National test performance at the end of Year 2 improved significantly this year to an average level, after being well below average for the previous three years.

There is considerable variation in standards, progress and achievement between the different classes in the school.

- In the Foundation Stage, Reception children do not make enough progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy so that by the end of the Foundation Stage there is underachievement in key areas of learning and children do not reach the goals set in several areas of their learning.

- In the infants, standards are about what are expected for the age of the children and there is some good progress this term.
- In the junior classes, standards are too low and there is widespread underachievement. The exception is in Year 3, where standards are average and pupils are making satisfactory progress. There has been inadequate progress in Years 4 and 5 this term, so that pupils' achievement is inadequate. In Year 6, pupils are making satisfactory progress from their starting points at the beginning of term, so while there has been underachievement in the past this is slowly being remedied.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children's personal development, as well as their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is satisfactory and so is their attendance. This is because of stable staffing, clear expectations and radical changes to the curriculum since the start of this term. Parents reported that they had many concerns about behaviour in school during the last school year. Behaviour in the school is now satisfactory, and pupils show positive attitudes to their learning in most classes. In classes where learning is not well planned or expectations are too low, attitudes and behaviour are sometimes unsatisfactory. Pupils have a sensible approach to healthy living and they have plenty of physical activity in lessons each week. Many pupils are not well prepared with basic skills for the next stage of education because of the gaps in their learning. Pupils have some responsibilities, which they enjoy and older pupils say they would welcome more opportunity to play a part in the life of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate because too many lessons do not ensure that children make the progress of which they are capable. Despite this overall judgement, the quality of teaching and learning is improving and in many classes is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have worked hard, in collaboration with the acting headteacher, to establish common planning formats, so that the needs of all pupils are taken into account. While this is successful in most classes, there are still classes where children are either not challenged enough or the work is too difficult for them. In Years 4 and 5, children's attitudes to learning are adversely affected by this and this is seen clearly in the quality of work in their books this term.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Radical revision of curriculum planning and content by the acting headteacher at the start of this term has established a curriculum which now meets statutory requirements and ensures continuity and progression in children's learning. The curriculum provides a sound basis from which pupils can develop their interests and talents and is suitably adapted in most classes for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Improvements this term to information and communication technology are already beginning to have an impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning. Year 5 pupils are enthusiastic about using computers for research in history because, "You can find out some gruesome facts about the Aztecs on the web." Indoor and outdoor accommodation and learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are very good. The curriculum is enhanced through links with the local secondary school to provide French for Year 6 pupils, and through a range of visits and visitors. The provision for after-school clubs was reduced last year through staff absence and currently only one operates.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's arrangements for health and safety and child protection are all in place. Older children say they feel more secure in school this term because they have the same teacher every day and the school is calmer than it was last term. The warm, trusting relationships that are developing between teachers and children are having a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Guidance for learning is inadequate at present because of the lack of, and minimal use of, accurate information to track their progress. While most teachers are effectively assessing pupils' learning in daily lessons, they have not had time to establish what gaps exist because of prior weak teaching and so have not begun to tackle the underachievement of pupils. The acting headteacher has this as a priority for improvement this term. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is improving through a greater involvement of classroom teachers in setting targets and measuring pupils' progress towards them. The school is developing closer links with parents of children who have learning difficulties and parents are cautiously appreciative of this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school are inadequate and it lacks the capacity to improve. Senior managers have had too little impact on raising standards because their monitoring activities have not been focused on the most significant weaknesses. Actions they have taken have not successfully tackled the widespread underachievement in mathematics and English and standards in these subjects are too low. The governing body has not held the school to account for its performance. There is a new governing body this term following the resignation of the previous governing body last term.

While the governors are committed and very supportive of the school, they have yet to understand the considerable weaknesses that the school has to overcome in order to provide an acceptable standard of education for all of its pupils.

The expertise, commitment and determination of the acting headteacher have given the school a very good start this term in the most significant areas of its work. Her quick and accurate appraisal of the weaknesses enabled the school to draw in well targeted support from the local authority to help teachers prepare thoroughly for the new term and to create a bright and welcoming environment for children when they returned to school. Good relationships in the school have developed quickly and there is a strong team ethos, which belies the short time some staff have been in the school. Parents and children are pleased to see the beginnings of a happy, purposeful school once more.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	3

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 September 2006

Greenside Primary School

Rockwood Hill Road

Greenside

Ryton

Tyne and Wear

NE40 4AX

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. It was very good to hear from some of you how well things have improved this term and that most of you feel that you can get on and work hard without interruption. I agree that in some classes, a few of you need to manage your behaviour better and show more consideration for other children. I could see that in most classes you are forming good relationships with your teachers, who are working hard to help you learn.

When I looked at your work, I could see that some of you had not learned as much as you could last year because of changes of the teacher who taught you. I also saw that most of you are trying hard this term and making up for lost time. Well done. There are still a few of you who are not showing pride in your learning and I have asked the headteacher to improve the teaching in your classes so that you feel more confident about what you are doing and begin to take care with your work.

Your school has been through some very difficult times in recent years and you have had many changes in teachers and headteacher in that time. I have asked for help for your school, called special measures, so that the new headteacher and the governors can quickly improve how well you are taught and how well you learn. Inspectors will also return to check that your school continues to improve. I know this will make you all feel happier in the end because you, your parents and teachers will feel proud of your achievements.

My best wishes to you in helping to make your school even better in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector