

# The Avenue Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 111595           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Middlesbrough    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 288998           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 15–16 March 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Linda Buller     |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 269   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Cllr Brenda Thompson                                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Judith Dodd                                     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 June 2002   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | The Avenue<br>Nunthorpe<br>Middlesbrough<br>TS7 0AG |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01642 318510  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01642 311616  |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools nationally. It is in an area that is above average in terms of social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is lower than the national average. Fewer pupils than in most schools nationally have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is also below average. Most children are White British with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds whose home language is not English. None of these pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. On entry to school, standards are broadly typical of children of Nursery age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that does some things well and is improving. It works well with others to provide pupils with a good range of activities additional to lessons. These opportunities make a substantial contribution to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Visits out, including residential experiences, special themed weeks and days, links with other schools, and after-school clubs all help pupils to gain a good knowledge of the world. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their future education and have a good understanding of the qualities needed to live in harmony in multi-cultural Britain.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory leading to satisfactory achievement. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, which help to create a good climate for learning. Pupils are cared for well and provided with satisfactory support and guidance. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because of consistently good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, most reach and many exceed the early learning goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory resulting in satisfactory progress and pupils attain above average standards. In Key Stage 2, progress is inconsistent although the rate of progress increases in Years 5 and 6 ensuring that pupils reach at least average standards by the time they leave the school. This represents satisfactory progress compared to this particular group of pupils' starting points in Year 3. Pupils with learning difficulties, vulnerable children and minority ethnic pupils make satisfactory progress.

Teachers are beginning to use the good information gained from tracking pupils' progress to plan effective lessons. However, this is inconsistent across the school. In some lessons, work is not planned carefully enough for the varied needs of individuals or small groups of pupils. The curriculum is strong in supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and form positive relationships. They feel safe at school and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They make a strong contribution to the school and wider community and gain much in return. However, curriculum planning is focused mainly on age-related activities and is not fully matched to pupils' capabilities and is, therefore, satisfactory overall.

Leadership and management including governance are satisfactory but improving. The school has an accurate picture of its own effectiveness and the close tracking of pupils' progress is used well to pinpoint areas for improvement. New initiatives and new ways of working have been introduced and staff, pupils and governors agree that changes have been made for the better. These are noticeably beginning to raise standards and are a good indication of the school's good capacity to improve. Monitoring of teaching and the impact of new initiatives at times still lacks rigour. As a result, not all the changes have yet been embedded or consolidated to improve teaching and learning in all classes. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour of monitoring and its impact on the quality of teaching.
- Develop the use of assessment and tracking information in lesson planning so that work is matched accurately to pupils' varying needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with the national average. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage with most reaching and many exceeding the early learning goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress to reach standards above the national average by the end of Year 2.

School data and inspection evidence indicates that progress in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. The rate of progress increases in Years 5 and 6 due to consistently good teaching and as a result standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. This pattern of attainment is reflected in the results of the 2006 national tests with standards above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with the national average in Key Stage 2. This represents satisfactory progress for these groups of pupils given their differing starting points. Due to good intervention strategies, more pupils than in recent years reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics. Despite this improvement the school did not reach its challenging targets as fewer pupils than nationally attained this level, particularly in writing. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are on course to reach their targets this year. This is because of the good strategies put in place by the leaders of the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Vulnerable children and minority ethnic pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards similar to their classmates. There is no significant pattern of any difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The good start in the Nursery helps children settle quickly into school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most have positive attitudes to learning. This is reflected in their good attendance, which is above the national average. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite, confident and articulate. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and the need to take regular exercise. They feel safe because they know any incident of harassment, including bullying, will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school. They support fund-raising events, contribute well to the "playground buddies" scheme and enthusiastically attend a variety of after school activities. Through the school council, pupils take decision-making very seriously. A good example of this is seen in the work to design activity trails for the playgrounds. Links with other schools and initiatives such as "Going Global Week" result in pupils' good understanding of different faiths and lifestyles. Pupils are well prepared for life in multi-cultural Britain and have the necessary basic skills for future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage where teaching is good. It is sharply focused and expectations of the standards all children are

capable of attaining are high. Every moment is used well to promote effective learning. Good teaching is not yet consistent enough throughout the school. In lessons which are lively and interesting, pupils engage well in their learning. In others, concentration dips because the pace is too slow and pupils spend too long consolidating what they already know.

Teachers manage behaviour well and pupils look forward to their lessons. They feel positive about learning because they get on well with the adults in the classroom. Teaching assistants provide good support for less able pupils and those whose home language is not English, helping them to progress as well as their classmates.

New tracking systems enable teachers methodically to check how each pupil is doing. This information is used well in Year 6 to pinpoint support in order to boost achievement in English and mathematics. This is not yet as effective in other classes as teachers do not consistently use this information to plan work to match the needs of individuals within each class.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It complies with national requirements and responds well to recent initiatives in its provision of a modern foreign language and vigorous physical activity. The strengths of the curriculum lie in the way pupils' learning experiences are enhanced through visits out of school and visitors into school. Pupils and parents enthuse about the range of extra activities and provision for residential visits. Although pupils enjoy the activities planned for them, the curriculum has not had sufficient impact in raising standards. This is because curriculum planning concentrates on age-related activities rather than pupils' different levels of prior attainment.

Effective provision is made for the development of pupils' personal and social skills and their understanding of citizenship. The success of this is evident in their mature and sensible behaviour. A strong feature of curriculum provision is the school's acknowledgment of its responsibility towards an understanding of a culturally diverse society.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Procedures and routines to ensure pupils' health and safety are in place. Child protection and recommended safeguarding procedures are in place and the good links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, are met. There is a good level of care for pupils throughout the school day and those with medical conditions are supported well. However, although procedures for administering first aid are satisfactory there is a need to ensure that training is updated.

Although all teachers have up-to-date information about the progress pupils have made they do not consistently use this information to provide targeted support or effective guidance. As a result, not all pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing or how they can reach higher standards.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. Through an accurate self-evaluation, the headteacher and her senior team have very clear ideas about where they want the school to go and know its strengths and weaknesses well. This has resulted in effective action being taken to track pupils' progress. The information gathered has been used well to set a clear direction for improvement. This is showing definite signs of improvement in standards. For example, good teaching and targeted support have resulted in an increased rate of progress in Years 5 and 6 with pupils attaining at least expected standards and more pupils reaching higher levels. These improvements are a good indication of the school's good capacity to improve further. However, although monitoring of the quality of teaching takes place regularly at times it lacks rigour. As a result, not enough of the teaching is good.

Governance is satisfactory and improving. Governors know the school well and have provided good support for many of the recent initiatives; for example, in the development of community involvement and the improvement in school resources. They have a good understanding of the steps being taken to raise standards and are becoming sufficiently challenging in holding the school to account when achievement dips.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 3   |
| 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  | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 3 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 3 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 3 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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.

**Annex A****Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3   |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets   | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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  |

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**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

The Avenue Primary School

The Avenue

Nunthorpe

Middlesbrough

TS7 0AG

19 March 2007

Dear Pupils

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for giving up your time to talk with us. You provided us with a lot of valuable information about your school. Through your school council, you play an important part in the life of the school. Well done.

It was good to see that you enjoy school and that you make steady progress in your lessons so that you do as well as pupils in other schools. We saw lots of good behaviour and you told us that you all feel safe and secure in school and there is always someone there to help you if you are worried about something. You take plenty of exercise and know a lot about healthy eating. It was particularly impressive how much you all know about children in other schools and other parts of the world.

Your headteacher, other senior staff and governors now know a lot more about how well each of you are doing in your work. They have shared this with your teachers and in some classes your work is very carefully set so that it is at the right level for you. We have asked the teachers to make sure that this is the case for all the classes and that your headteacher and senior staff check very carefully that this is improving your learning.

You can help with this by continuing to come to school regularly and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector