



Greengate Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112205
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289201
Inspection dates 1–2 February 2007
Reporting inspector Karen Ling

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Type of school | Infant | School address | Greengate Street |
| School category | Community | | Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 | | LA13 9BY |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01229 894614 |
| Number on roll (school) | 310 | Fax number | 01229 894614 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Anne Berry |
| | | Headteacher | Miss Jennifer Marshall |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 September 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school situated within a socially and economically disadvantaged residential area of Barrow-in-Furness. Nearly all of the pupils are White British. The school supports a small minority of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is very high. A high proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved Cumbria's Healthy School status. It has also achieved the Artsmark Silver standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils are happy. Parents appreciate the efforts Greengate Infant School makes to boost children's confidence, and the quality of care it provides. Pupils do well here because staff are committed to giving pupils a very good grounding in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the school which staff share. The results of national tests, the school's records of pupils' progress, and the pupils' exercise books all show that pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, they reach broadly average standards. Pupils' good progress from a below average starting point is the result of teaching that is good overall, although at Foundation Stage it is not always good enough. Teachers know each child well. They monitor how well pupils are learning, and know what to do next to enable them to make further progress.

Children make good progress overall in the Nursery and Reception classes of the Foundation Stage particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff are knowledgeable about how young children learn best and generally provide appropriate activities to meet their needs. However, the recent review of provision at Foundation Stage has not effectively evaluated what is working well, and, consequently the quality of provision is satisfactory overall. In some instances, activities are not sufficiently purposeful or challenging, and as a result, children do not always make the progress they could. The impact of this recent review has implications for current plans to change the organisation of provision in the Foundation Stage.

The very good relationships between staff and pupils contribute directly to the pupils' strong personal development. Although the school has not established arrangements to consult the pupils on a formal basis, pupils' opinions are considered and their contributions are valued. For example, when pupils requested more toys and resources for playtimes, staff provided them. The care for pupils is good. Pupils feel safe and learn how to develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to work, and are provided with a firm basis for future learning.

The school has improved since the previous inspection. Standards have risen, particularly in the last two years. For instance, standards in science show an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving a higher standard than expected for their age. The effectiveness of the governing body has improved but it has yet to make a full contribution to checking how well the school is doing and planning for further improvement. Given the progress already made, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the Foundation Stage is developed in a way that enables all pupils to make good progress.
- Improve the governors' contribution to strategic planning and the monitoring of the school's performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. This is because they reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. When children enter the school, their general skills and abilities are below average, particularly in speaking and listening skills, and early reading and writing. They catch up in several areas of learning during the Foundation Stage, and make good progress but their language skills remain below average at the end of Reception. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1, with the result that standards reached are broadly average by the end of that key stage, with attainment higher in mathematics than in reading and writing.

The school helps all pupils to do well because staff are skilful at settling pupils and raising their self-esteem. Overall, standards have risen over the past two years, and last year saw an increase in the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving above average standards. The focus on pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills is having a positive impact on standards. A high proportion of pupils have some form of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, often related to language development. The small number of pupils at the school who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Moral and social development are particular strengths. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school which helps to explain why attendance is good. They often work in small groups with adult support which helps them to keep focused on their work. Most of the time pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils make a positive contribution to school. For example, they have been involved in contributing to designs for playground equipment. There is a commitment to pupils' well-being demonstrated through pupils learning about keeping safe. This is helped by the visits from 'Kidsafe' staff who, for example, teach pupils about bullying and how to protect themselves. Some of the older pupils are watchful buddies to younger pupils on the playground and speak with maturity about this responsible role. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy. They know that regular exercise, healthy food and hygiene routines, such as washing hands are necessary for a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils are involved in community projects. For example, the school has links with Age Concern through a project known as 'Building Bridges'. The harvest tea prepared and served by pupils to elderly people in the community was greatly appreciated. Pupils help to raise money for a range of charities including the local air ambulance. Pupils develop an awareness of cultures other than their own. For example, they increased their knowledge of African culture by a visit to a touring children's choir from Africa, and they have been learning about African art and dance in lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Most teachers effectively manage the different needs within their classes. They plan work to match pupils' capabilities and use a range of methods to retain their interest. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Overall, support staff and teaching assistants know what they must do to help pupils learn, and provide effective support much of the time. Those pupils who need additional support are provided for very well by skilled teaching assistants who give them effective, short teaching sessions outside the classroom. Here, activities provide a sharp focus on those areas which need most attention. This works very well.

Most pupils work to suitably challenging targets and teachers regularly encourage pupils to think about what they have to do to improve their work. Where teaching is good, effective questioning is used to make pupils work things out, check their work and complete tasks. Where teaching is less effective, the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. During such classes, activities do not provide enough challenge and pupils lose interest before completing an activity. This means that at times pupils do not make enough progress during lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is of a good quality. It meets all statutory requirements and is enhanced by the teamwork of staff across the school in building up pupils' speaking and listening skills. This is helping to raise standards. Staff are improving ways of building on these skills in lessons in several subjects. Where it is already working well, pupils are able to practise their skills more frequently. The school is keen to involve parents in supporting their child's learning and holds workshops from time to time. At Christmas, for example, a number of parents worked alongside their children in the classroom on art and design activities.

An extensive range of visits and visitors support the curriculum and extend experiences for pupils. For example, they have visited the Beatrix Potter exhibition and Grizedale Forest in the Lake District. Through the Collaborative Arts project, children have worked alongside children from different schools and have produced some art work of high quality. It is no surprise that the school achieved the Silver Award from the Arts Council. Workshops run by staff after school mean that pupils can enjoy cookery and sewing activities amongst others, if they choose. The enhancement of the curriculum is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A particular strength of the school is the care given to pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. There is a real desire amongst staff to help pupils achieve their potential. An initiative to promote self-esteem is proving effective. A mathematics project aimed at raising standards is embedded across the school and is having a positive effect. Well planned problem-solving activities are proving to be successful in raising boys' achievement. Pupils are rewarded for their efforts through verbal praise and reward schemes and their achievements, both academic and non academic are celebrated. The support for the more vulnerable, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Child protection and staff vetting procedures are in place. Not all staff have received appropriate training on safeguarding as yet though plans are in place to address this.

Targets are set by teachers for pupils and reviewed regularly. The headteacher has an overview of the progress pupils make and documentation, although cumbersome, is understood by staff and acted on appropriately. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language, are supported well. Teachers learn basic vocabulary in the child's first language, which helps the child to settle and to begin to improve their learning. The school has good arrangements to make children's transition to junior school as smooth as possible.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership, offering clear direction on what needs to be improved and how that improvement will be achieved. There is a real sense of teamwork within the school as members of staff take responsibility for areas of the curriculum, initiatives and projects. This results in a collaborative approach in moving the school forward. Staff make valuable contributions to the quality of the curriculum and support their colleagues well. Staff know where improvements are needed most, although how those improvements will be monitored and reviewed is less clear.

Good use is made of the school building, and the outdoor environment has been improved since the last inspection. Direct access from classrooms means that the outdoor environment can be used effectively by staff and pupils.

Governance is satisfactory. There has been some difficulty in recruiting new governors in recent years and vacancies remain. Nonetheless, the group manages most aspects of governance satisfactorily. The governing body does not yet have a good grasp of where the school stands in terms of children's attainment in education, and what the school needs to do to improve further. However, recent training and an effort by governing body members to develop their roles and responsibilities has placed the governing body in a good position to be able to hold the school to account more effectively in the future.

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Inspection judgements

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

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 | 3 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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

| | |
|---|---|
| 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? | 2 |

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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Greengate Infant School

Greengate Street

Barrow-in-Furness

Cumbria

LA13 9BY

2 February 2007

Dear Children

As you know, I visited your school recently with Mrs Pat Kime to see how well you were doing. Thank you for being so helpful during the inspection. I am now writing to you to tell you what we found out about your school.

We decided that Greengate Infant school is a good school and this is why.

- All the adults work really well together to help you make progress in your learning.
- You do well at school, and children who find learning difficult get the help they need.
- Your headteacher and teachers are doing the right things to improve your school and to help you do even better in your work. For example, they are helping you to be better at speaking and listening, and this will help you to become better writers.
- The adults help you to get along with each other, and to learn how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

The staff and the school's governors are going to continue to make your school even better.

- They will make changes to some of the activities in Nursery and Reception to help the younger children learn even more.
- They will also check how well their plans for the school are working.

Keep up all your good work and make every effort to do your best for yourself and for your school.

Yours sincerely

Karen Ling

Lead inspector