

The Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114046
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	289791
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Hillery
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Hume
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002
School address	Oakfield Lane The Grove Consett County Durham DH8 8AP
Telephone number	01207 502938
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, which serves an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. When children start school their attainment is well below what is typical for their age; many have delayed language development and/or speech difficulties. There is an above average percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal. There is a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the number who have a statement of special educational need is above average. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups; none speak English as an additional language. An equally small number of pupils are looked after. There is an increasing level of pupil mobility. The school provides breakfast and after school clubs.

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, which provides good value for money. It has outstanding features. It works within a challenging social context where many of the pupils need considerable help and encouragement for them to learn successfully. Parents are very supportive of the school and speak of the welcoming atmosphere where their children feel 'loved and supported'. The dedicated leadership of the headteacher underpins the inclusive nature of the school. As a result, most pupils achieve well and make very good progress in their personal development.

Standards are average by the end of Year 6. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding so that children quickly become busy, independent learners and achieve very well. In Years 1 and 2 they make good progress because teaching builds well upon their prior learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable receive high quality support and achieve well in relation to their capabilities. The progress of higher attaining pupils is more erratic because teachers do not always plan to challenge them sufficiently.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils feel well supported and cared for. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in improving attendance levels. All pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy, keep themselves safe and how to become responsible members of the school community. Their good learning, along with the school's very strong emphasis on personal development, ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good, with outstanding features. This promotes good achievement for all pupils. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, behaviour is outstanding and pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They respond very well to the lively, creative curriculum, which excites and motivates them. The school takes excellent care of its pupils through rigorous safeguarding practices and a thorough knowledge of each pupil. Pupils know how well they are doing because they are given good quality advice on what they need to do next to improve.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership team works very effectively together, supported by the able governing body. School leaders have a clear vision for the future direction of the school; they know its strengths and areas for development well. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers' planning is sufficiently differentiated to accommodate the needs of higher attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Due to the excellent Nursery provision pupils make an outstanding start and achieve extremely well. They continue to make very good progress to reach standards which are close to national expectations by the end of the Reception year.

Standards vary from year to year because of the differing ability profiles of the intakes. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1. They respond well to challenging targets and reach average

standards by the end of Year 2. Standards are rising in both key stages and are average by the end of Year 6. In 2006, results at the end of Year 6 were below average in English, mathematics and science. This does not reflect the positive trend of improvement maintained since the last inspection. The dip in standards in 2006 is attributable to an exceptionally high level of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within a small cohort of pupils and the effect of an increasingly transient pupil population.

The school has been particularly successful in raising achievement in writing and mathematics through the effective use of a number of intervention programmes. A good example of this is seen in the impact of the Big Write Project, which has resulted in pupils making very good progress in their ability to write creatively across the curriculum.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, with pupils in receipt of a statement of special education need doing very well. These pupils receive very carefully planned provision to match their very specific needs. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are looked after also make good progress. Although there is some variation in the attainment of boys and girls, there is no discernible pattern. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the level of challenge is not high enough in some lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Children feel very welcome and secure when they start school and they rapidly develop very good social skills. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, pupils are very well behaved and manage their feelings and emotions very well. They feel safe because they know any incident of harassment will be dealt with quickly. Pupils enjoy learning and take part enthusiastically in the many exciting opportunities the school provides. The school promotes healthy lifestyles very well. This enables pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat and to take regular exercise. Pupils take a great pride in their contributions to the community. They appreciate the playground buddies system, act responsibly as members of the school action nutrition group and sing enthusiastically with the Salvation Army. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved this year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and in some lessons, outstanding. Pupils work hard and are very keen to do well. For example, learning in the Foundation Stage is highly effective because teachers and support staff are very clear about what they want children to learn and exciting activities are offered, which fully support their needs and abilities. Generally, lessons are well planned and resources, including computer technology, used well to enrich learning. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 writing lesson where pupils made very good use of a range of seascape artefacts when writing inspiring desert island diaries. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning does not always identify the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Where this is the case, the pace of learning is slower and the level of pupils' engagement less secure. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and learn at a fast rate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a stimulating curriculum with a wide range of enrichment activities, such as challenges for gifted and talented pupils and an emphasis on the performing arts. As a result, pupils are excited about their learning. The opportunities for learning beyond the classroom are excellent. This gives pupils the chance to develop special talents or interests and prepares them well for later life. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is outstanding; it is vibrant and creative and provides the youngest children with the best possible start to learning. All of this greatly enhances the statutory provision for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose needs are very well met. The outstanding programme of social and health education helps pupils develop excellent values of trust, respect and understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding because of the very high quality care and support each child receives. Procedures for child protection, risk assessments and health and safety are fully in place. Pupils feel safe because they know that an adult will help them if they have a problem. Induction arrangements are excellent. Procedures for welcoming pupils new to the school help them settle in quickly and feel part of the school community. In the Foundation Stage, great care is taken to ensure that information on new starters is collated quickly and support targeted where it is needed. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and is very well supported by excellent links with external agencies. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are thorough and this means vulnerable pupils are identified quickly and support targeted well. Pupils are guided to assess their own learning and focused marking by teachers gives good advice on how they can improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The caring and dedicated leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. As a result, the school's inclusion practices are well established. The impact of this provision is seen in the good progress made by the majority of learners. The deputy headteacher successfully supports the headteacher through specific significant contribution to the development of the school. For example, her excellent leadership of the Foundation Stage has resulted in children achieving very well. Self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and provide an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs attention. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly by senior leaders and support is provided when required. However, leaders have not yet been successful in ensuring planning consistently identifies appropriate levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Governors know the school well and play a full part in planning its development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	1
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.

Annex A

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	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	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

15 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grove Primary School, County Durham, DH8 8AP

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Your comments were very helpful in helping Mr Lowes and I get to know your school in the short time we were with you.

We think your school is a good school. You are right to be proud of it because your headteacher, the staff and governors care very much about you all and make sure you receive a good education. We could see you really enjoy school and that you are excited about your learning. We were really impressed by the way Year 6 pupils talked about their visit to the 'Forest Classroom'. You are learning to live healthy lives by eating lots of fruit and vegetables and drinking water. We know you take lots of exercise and try to keep fit. We think your school gives you good opportunities through the school councils to present your views on new developments like the Big Write Project. We also liked the way you support your local community through your involvement in fund raising activities. We know how caring you are by the way you support children who live in The Hope Centre in Nepal. You all make very good progress in learning to be responsible and caring individuals.

Your teachers are working hard to make lessons interesting and we liked the work you have done about managing your feelings and being kind to each other. You told us you feel safe in your school and we think the 'Worry Box' is a really good way of helping you share your problems with an adult. We thought your behaviour was excellent. You were all polite and respectful and we were impressed with your very good attitudes to learning. We were really pleased to hear one of you say 'Our school is nice because it cares'. We certainly agree with you!

Your school is working hard to make sure you are all challenged in your learning. I have asked the school to make sure this is the case for all pupils who are able to do even harder work. This will make sure you all continue to make good progress and that you are well prepared for your move to your secondary school at the end of Year 6. We really enjoyed our visit to your school and we hope you will all continue to try hard and do your best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Armstrong

Lead Inspector