

Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124010
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	292859
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fred Batho
Headteacher	Jan Browning
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Normacot Grange Road Meir Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7AW
Telephone number	01782 319097
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves an area of above average social deprivation. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and the few pupils with English as an additional language very quickly learn to speak English. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and statements of special educational need are well above average. Most children enter the Foundation Stage (Reception) with skills that are below those expected for their age. The headteacher is on long-term absence and an acting headteacher has been appointed. An experienced consultant headteacher is also providing support during this absence. The school is part of the Intensifying Support Programme, which is a national initiative aimed at raising standards.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 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 and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school's effectiveness is inadequate. This is because the leadership has not done enough to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good enough to enable pupils of all abilities to make adequate progress. As a result, progress is inconsistent. In Reception, children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority are working within the goals expected for their age. However, this does not continue and there is significant underachievement in Years 1 to 5. In Year 6, progress is good, although standards remain below average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is inadequate and standards are below average because teaching is inadequate. Despite participating in the Intensifying Support Programme for the last three years, weaknesses in teaching have not been tackled rigorously enough to improve the rates of pupils' learning as they move through the school. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged and expectations are low. The pace of learning is often too slow and planning does not clearly identify what pupils are expected to learn.

Despite this, pupils enjoy school and their personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They say they like their friends, and enjoy learning even though some say, 'we could learn much more and do harder work!' Behaviour is good and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle but do not always use this knowledge to make sensible eating choices. Their attendance, although below average, has improved as a result of effective measures introduced by the school. Care, guidance and support are inadequate. Pastoral guidance is satisfactory and pupils mainly feel safe in school. Relationships between the staff and pupils are good and contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. However, there are weaknesses in academic guidance as assessment information is not always accurate and teachers do not use information well enough to plan future learning. The curriculum is inadequate. It does not satisfactorily meet the range of pupils' needs. Although the indoor curriculum for Reception children is good, the lack of a safe outdoor area and limited resources mean opportunities for outdoor learning are restricted.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The new acting leadership team is aware of the strengths and weaknesses but has had insufficient time to improve provision. Monitoring and evaluation systems lack rigour and the staff are not held accountable for the standards that their pupils attain. Governors do not challenge the school enough about standards or achievement and key subject leaders have not been given sufficient time or training to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are lower and the key issues identified have not been rectified. The school evaluates its performance too generously and the capacity to improve further is inadequate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, increasing the pace of learning and ensuring planning clearly identifies the learning expected.
- Develop assessment systems that provide teachers with accurate information about pupils' standards and progress to support the planning of learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by involving leadership at all levels in rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures and making staff more accountable for their pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Most children make good progress in Reception and by the time they enter Year 1, most have broadly achieved the goals expected for their age. However, this progress is not sustained and there is significant underachievement in Years 1 to 5. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly below average and are continuing to decline. In Years 3 to 5, standards are exceptionally low, particularly in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, because of better teaching, pupils make rapid progress and achievement is good. Even so, standards remain below average in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities also underachieve over time, although they make better progress when working with teaching assistants. The few pupils who are learning English for the first time, despite limited support, soon become proficient in spoken English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school and as one pupil said, 'Everyone is friendly here'. Nevertheless, the level of attendance is below the national average, although it is improving. Pupils' behaviour is good. Most pupils think that bullying is dealt with quickly and fairly by the staff, although a small number of parents and some pupils report that bullying, mainly at lunchtime, is not always dealt with effectively.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and show care and consideration for each other. Visitors, such as representatives from the organisation 'Children from Europe', support pupils' satisfactory appreciation of other cultures. However, pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain is not sufficiently well developed.

Pupils know how to live a healthy lifestyle. Even so, at lunchtimes, they do not consistently use this knowledge when making food choices. They know how to keep themselves safe and are eager to take responsibility as 'playground buddies' or school councillors, for example. They enjoy the opportunity to sing at community events knowing the value of contributing to community life. Below average literacy and numeracy skills mean that pupils are not satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is not good enough to overcome the underachievement that is evident in most year groups. Pupils' books and assessment information indicate that there are too many lessons where pupils do not learn enough. The pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of learning. There are weaknesses in planning as teachers concentrate too much on planning what pupils will do in the lessons, and not enough on what pupils are expected to learn.

The teaching in Reception and Year 6 is of a good standard and provides an example for others to learn from. In these classes, it is clear what learning is expected and assessment information is used effectively to plan next steps of learning. Good relationships between adults and pupils are evident throughout the school. This helps pupils to develop positive attitudes towards their work and to try hard to do their best. Teaching assistants give sensitive support to pupils, including those with learning difficulties, but they are not always used effectively at the start of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Planning does not meet the needs of all pupils, and the time allocated to teaching in Years 3 to 6 is below recommendations. The arrangement to group older pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy, in order to ensure work is matched more appropriately to their differing needs, is not as effective as it might be. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise skills learnt in English and mathematics because links between other subjects are not sufficiently well established. The Reception indoor curriculum is good and enables children to progress well in all areas of learning.

Provision for developing pupils' personal skills is satisfactory and underpins their sound personal development. Enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. A variety of visits, visitors and clubs satisfactorily promotes pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

All procedures for safeguarding pupils including child protection are securely in place. Outside agencies work closely with the school to ensure the well-being of pupils. For example, work is undertaken with the 'Emir Family Intervention Project' to help pupils access learning. Pupils feel that incidents of bullying are dealt with well by teaching staff but feel less safe during lunchtimes. However, they know the learning mentor will always take appropriate action if they are concerned. Incidents of a racist nature are nipped in the bud quickly by the staff.

Academic guidance is unsatisfactory because information about how well pupils are doing is not always accurate and is not used effectively to support pupils' differing academic needs. These are important factors in pupils' underachievement. The quality of marking is inconsistent and written feedback does not provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school has been through a difficult time over the past few years. Falling rolls and budgetary issues have resulted in reduced staffing and class reorganisation. However, these matters have not been managed well, standards have declined and weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have not been rectified. The new chair of governors knows that the governing body, although supportive, has not challenged the school enough about the standards pupils attain.

Although the acting headteacher and consultant support headteacher know the weaknesses in provision, existing leadership and management systems, including monitoring and evaluation procedures, are weak. Recent improvements in tracking pupils' progress have exposed underachievement, but teachers are not held accountable for the progress their pupils make. Subject leadership is underdeveloped. The English and mathematics subject leaders are knowledgeable and know why standards are as they are. However, they have not been given the time or the training to influence provision effectively in their subjects.

The school works satisfactorily with parents and the local community to help overcome the barriers between home and school. Parents and pupils are consulted for their views and this information is used satisfactorily to improve provision. For example, 'playground buddies' have been introduced in response to concerns about bullying.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	3
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	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	3
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	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?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	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

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange Primary School, Meir, ST3 7AW

You may remember that three inspectors visited your school recently to see how you are coming along with your learning. Thank you for welcoming us and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly. We were pleased to find some good things in your school, but we think that your teachers could be doing much more to make sure you all achieve as well as you can. So, we have made your school subject to 'special measures'. This means that your school will receive extra help and inspectors will return to check on the progress that is being made. One of the good things is the way those of you in Reception make good progress. However, we think that the opportunities you have to learn outdoors are not good enough. We were pleased to find out that you enjoy school and we think your behaviour is good. You know lots about healthy eating, the importance of regular exercise and how to keep yourselves safe. Those of you I spoke to informed me 'I should try my hardest to eat five fruit and vegetables each day!' Some of you do not always attend as regularly as you should, but we know that the school is trying hard to get you to improve this. We were pleased to know you feel safe at school and we think the 'playground buddies' are doing a good job.

We agree with some of you when you told us you could do harder work. Teachers do not always expect enough of you and some of them are not always clear about what they expect you to learn. They do not always have correct information about what you know and can do. This means that you do not all learn as well as you should in English, mathematics and science. We think that those of you who find learning more difficult receive helpful support from the teaching assistants.

- We have asked the acting headteacher to:
- check very carefully and often on what is happening in the school
- make sure that the school's leaders, including governors and teachers who are responsible for different subjects, become more involved in making your school much better
- meet regularly with teachers and talk to them about the progress you are making and check if it is good enough. The acting headteacher knows what needs to be done to make things better but has not had time to do all these things. So please help as she tries to improve your school by continuing to work hard.

Yours faithfully Lois Furness Lead inspector