

# The Grange Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104859
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308686
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Aitken

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	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs A Tisdall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr B Norbury
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Stonyfield Sefton Bootle Merseyside L30 0QS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 9247917
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 9315729

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger-than-average school is situated in the northern suburbs of Bootle. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Almost all pupils are White British and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A highly distinctive feature of the school is the six resource units it operates on behalf of the local authority for pupils, from Reception to Year 6, who have a statement of special educational need. These pupils have a very wide range of needs including autism and speech and language difficulties. They account for 25% of the total school roll, an exceptionally high proportion, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school as a whole. In the last two years the school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark Award and the International Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

In its self-evaluation this school judged itself to be outstanding in all aspects, except the Foundation Stage, which it judged to be good. Inspectors entirely agree with these judgements and so endorse the views of parents who express an exceptional level of satisfaction with the work of the school.

At its heart lies an unswerving commitment to enable all of its pupils to achieve as well as they can. It succeeds very well in this. The achievement of both pupils in the mainstream and those in the units is outstanding. Mainstream pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, from a well below average starting point. The impact of the learning difficulties and/or disabilities experienced by some pupils means that the overall standards of these groups are low, but they nevertheless make excellent progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are seamlessly integrated into school life. A powerful symbol of this is the interspersing of mainstream and unit classrooms. On a practical level this facilitates the exchange of resources, joint planning and the transfer of pupils, as, for example, when individual pupils from the units join the mainstream classes for specific subjects. This arrangement, together with the new adjacent personalised learning rooms, ensures that no time is lost and supports pupils' achievement very well. This underlines to the pupils in the unit how much they matter in this school and it boosts their self-esteem.

Pupils take great enjoyment in their education because outstanding teaching ensures that the work they receive engages them fully and challenges them to learn. This factor, combined with an excellent curriculum, helps them to achieve exceptionally well in all subjects. Writing skills are steadily improving, as the school is very successfully introducing a new writing initiative in all year groups. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Topics, such as one on the Victorians, are used effectively to help pupils make connections in their learning and to reinforce literacy skills. Lessons in Spanish and Chinese enrich learning and widen cultural horizons. An extensive range of out-of-school activities, including residential visits, trips and exchanges with China, enriches pupils' experience and contributes significantly to their personal development. The curriculum also ensures pupils are well informed about healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe.

Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations and they develop well into open, considerate and confident young people. Relationships are excellent and pupils make very good use of the opportunities they are given to contribute fully in lessons, assemblies and work with the wider community.

The progress of all pupils is very closely monitored, and well established programmes are implemented swiftly to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers work very closely with teaching assistants to ensure support is of high quality. The success of these actions is reflected in the outstanding progress made by all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, irrespective of the level of their needs. The school makes excellent use of partnerships with a wide range of organisations to enhance the curriculum and levels of care provided.

A key factor to the success of the school is its exceptional leadership and management. The headteacher's strategic vision, dedication and pursuit of excellence provide a strong steer for his colleagues. Senior leaders have an outstanding level of complementary skills, middle leaders are quick to exercise initiative, and other staff share and act on the high expectations very well.

Senior leaders quietly pride themselves on being 'at the cutting edge' of innovation. They are continually seeking to improve the high quality of education provided, including the very good standard of resources and accommodation. The school has succeeded in 'raising the bar' since its previous highly positive inspection report and is very well placed for further improvement. It provides excellent value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage provides a good education for the children. On entry to Nursery, children's skills and knowledge are well below the level expected nationally for three-year-olds. Some children start with a poor level of communication, language and social skills. A well planned range of activities, combined with a high level of pastoral care, ensure children settle quickly and enjoy their learning. The curriculum is well balanced, providing an effective mix of indoor and outdoor activities. Children have good opportunities to learn independently, to carry out mini-investigations and to develop their creative skills. Teachers are steadily building in more phonic work and opportunities for children to develop their communication skills but these have not had time to impact fully on standards. Teaching and learning is good overall with some very good features and this ensures the children make good progress in these two years. By the time children join Year 1 skills and knowledge remain well below average overall, but half the children are working towards the early learning goals. Children's' achievements are recorded efficiently, assessment is effective and very good links with parents underpin children's learning. After some recent discontinuity in staffing, leadership is now successfully tackling the areas which need further development.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- This outstanding school knows itself very well and is already taking the steps it has identified to make it even better. As a result, no issues for improvement are raised.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

By the end of Year 6 standards are low overall. This solely reflects the composition of pupils in the school. Standards are well below average for mainstream pupils when they join Year 1. Thereafter, they build very well on their prior attainment so that by the end of Year 6 they attain broadly in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. All groups of Year 6 mainstream pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, attained above their national counterparts in 2007, when the school recorded its best ever results in the national tests. This represented excellent progress for this year group. An important factor in this improvement was the successful implementation of the 'Big Write' programme, which helped to close the gap between the level of pupils' reading and writing skills. This rate of progress is being maintained by other year groups who are now also taking part in this initiative. The fully attended after-school programmes for literacy and numeracy also reinforce basic skills for pupils who need extra help with their learning. Although standards remain low by the end of Year 6, progress is likewise exceptionally good in the mixed-age classes in the units. Pupils make rapid gains in their personal and social development and these support their academic achievement, especially in Key Stage 2. Mainstream and unit pupils achieve exceptionally well because all teachers have consistently high expectations for their progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is mirrored in rising levels of attendance and their excellent attitudes. This reflects their perception that school offers them many exciting opportunities and challenges. Exceptional relationships and a stimulating curriculum result in outstanding behaviour and a strong sense of community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, with the development of the middle two elements being exemplary. Pupils cooperate very well with each other and with adults and are quick to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of others. Pupils' aspirations and self-esteem are promoted very well in assemblies in which they play a full part. A symbol of this is the pride pupils take in their Children's University credits. Pupils are very happy in school, outgoing and mature and very well prepared for later life. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They learn to exercise responsibility, for example, as play pals or through the school council.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Consistently strong teaching is the bedrock of pupils' achievement. Teachers provide challenging and interesting work and ensure that pupils' learning moves on briskly. Pupils' ready compliance with teachers' requests is indicative of the high levels of mutual respect and the warmth of relationships. Teachers make excellent use of resources, including information and communication technology, to ensure pupils are fully engaged in learning. As a result, pupils concentrate well and participate fully, in whole-class sessions and when working independently. Teachers make very good use of their in-depth knowledge of the pupils to ensure the needs and abilities of all pupils are fully catered for. They are particularly skilful at questioning pupils in a way that makes them think hard and push back the boundaries of their understanding. Assessment is used very well, especially in English, to track pupils' progress and to let them know what they need to aim for next. This is supported by effective homework and by conscientious marking which provides detailed advice to help pupils improve. A further strength of the teaching is the very good use made of additional adults, who are pro-active in their support for those pupils who need more specialised help in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is rich and allows all pupils to achieve exceptionally well, not only academically but also in their personal development. The school very successfully fulfils its inclusive mission by ensuring all pupils have access to the full range of opportunities provided. For example, unit pupils learn modern foreign languages, are well represented on the school council and join mainstream lessons where it would accelerate their progress. Moreover, their work is fully adapted to individual needs, ensuring they are fully engrossed and totally focused on their learning. Similarly, for mainstream pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the timetabling of some support programmes at the end of the school day ensures they do not miss out on other essential elements of their learning. Curricular initiatives are carefully considered and implemented systematically, to enable their impact on standards to be thoroughly

evaluated. Pupils' ready recall of trips, recent and not so recent, to places near and far speaks volumes for their enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's systems for supporting the pastoral welfare and academic achievement of its pupils are of high quality. The school provides a calm, protective and well-ordered environment for pupils. Consequently, they feel nurtured and valued, secure in the knowledge that staff respond very sensitively to their needs. Health and safety and other systems to ensure pupils' welfare are managed very well. Attendance prizes and other incentives, for example, through accreditation by the Children's University scheme, are used thoughtfully to motivate pupils. Child protection and other arrangements for safeguarding children are properly in place. Staff know pupils and their levels of attainment very well. Their progress is promoted by well-organised and detailed tracking systems, which enable resources to be directed swiftly and shrewdly to ensure maximum progress for all pupils. Staff work very well together to ensure pupils progress smoothly from year to year. Very good links exist with mainstream secondary schools and secondary special schools to ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher and other leaders direct the work of the school exceptionally well. No stone is left unturned in the school's relentless quest to maintain and enhance the high standard of education provided. Monitoring, evaluation and review procedures are exhaustive and systematic. Evaluations are used exceptionally well to ensure actions taken to develop the curriculum are successful, before moving on to the next step. This underpins teachers' confidence as they know they are building progressively on firm foundations. Staff at all levels are provided with just the right balance of detailed guidance and scope to exercise their individual judgement. As a result, staff are highly motivated and keen to develop their skills further to support pupils' achievement. Pupils are set very challenging targets and their progress towards them is closely followed. This helps to ensure that in nearly all cases these targets are met and often exceeded. A further strength lies in the favourable ratio of additional adults to pupils, which enables lessons in the units to be very closely adapted to individual needs. Leaders are very aware of areas for further development. Governors are kept closely informed about the performance of the school and play a very good role in ensuring its continuing success.

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## Annex A

## 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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Inspection of The Grange Primary School, Bootle, L30 0QS

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for your help when we visited your school recently. I enjoyed my conversation with some of you in the new Blue Room. You told us how much you enjoy school and what a great place it is to be with exciting activities and interesting lessons. You will be pleased to know that we agree. We think the school is outstanding in nearly all parts of its work. Your headteacher and staff know the school very well and are very effective at continuing to improve it for you. You will not underestimate the size of the task the staff face to ensure you all receive an excellent education. This they do superbly under the dedicated, expert guidance of your headteacher. There is a super atmosphere in your school and you play your part in many ways. Examples of this are your excellent behaviour and the respect you show for the staff and each other. You mix together really well, so that no-one is left out.

At the heart of your outstanding progress is the quality of teaching you get, which is excellent. Your teachers work very hard to make your learning both challenging and fun for each of you, and they build excellent relationships with you. If we had come last term, I am sure we would have seen how much better you were than us in Chinese!

You recognise that 'the Big Write' is helping you with literacy and you are trying hard to keep improving your writing skills. Your attendance has improved a lot in the last few years and this is also helping your progress. Keep up the good work!