

Greave Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106050
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	309012
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Terry
Headteacher	Mrs S Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Werneth Road Woodley Stockport Cheshire SK6 1HR
Telephone number	0161 4306318
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of mainly private housing. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is lower than that in most schools, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and there are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school is being led by the deputy headteacher because of the headteacher's absence through illness. The school has been awarded the Information and Communication Technology Mark and Active Mark and has achieved National Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has some good features. Pupils rate the school highly and enjoy good relations with their teachers, saying they like them because they are friendly and help them to learn. Close attention is given to their personal development so that they develop into mature sensible young people as they progress through the school. Their self-esteem is developed well and they confidently talk to visitors and express their views about the school. Behaviour is good and the school has a warm and pleasant atmosphere. Classrooms are well ordered and pupils clearly enjoy the wide range of activities presented to them in the good curriculum. Their attitudes to learning are good and they generally work hard in lessons. Most parents are pleased with the education provided and the care taken of their children. They say their children enjoy school. 'Greave school provides a lovely environment for the children and benefits from good and enthusiastic teaching' typifies the views of parents. However, many express concerns at the lengthy absence of the headteacher and the impact this has on the work of the school. Whilst they are pleased with the hard efforts of the deputy headteacher and staff to overcome this difficulty, inspectors agree with their concern that this has had an impact on pupils' achievement, which has dipped in recent years.

Children make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, but in recent years standards at Year 2 have dropped from a level significantly above average to a level that was close to average in 2007. This is mainly the result of increasing numbers of pupils joining the school with special learning needs, but standards are not as high as they should be.

Over the last five years standards in Year 6 have generally been above average. In 2007 a number of pupils moved to other schools in a nearby local authority reportedly in order to ensure transfer to a specific secondary school. This had a negative impact on standards. Standards were average, but pupils did not achieve well enough, despite the loss of some higher attaining pupils. Determined action is being taken to remedy this situation, with some success. Currently, standards in Year 6 are broadly average. The quality of teaching is improving and, in the main, pupils are suitably challenged in lessons and are making satisfactory progress. Although assessment procedures do not yet track pupils' performance rigorously enough, the limited data available does indicate that achievement is satisfactory and improving. The system of tracking pupils' progress is ineffective because it does not evaluate pupils' progress often enough to enable pupils who fall behind to be given speedy support. Moreover, teachers' marking of work does not fully support pupils by providing clear pointers as to how they can improve.

The school provides satisfactory value for money. The deputy headteacher and staff are coping well with the difficulties created by the headteacher's absence. The clearly evident strong team approach is successfully ensuring that the school continues to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. However, systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are not well developed and do not adequately give the leadership a clear picture of the areas needing improvement. Governors are involved and provide satisfactory support and challenge. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and, taking into account the impact of the teamwork evident in the school, the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The good induction arrangements are appreciated by parents and enable children to quickly settle. Teaching is good and the staff provide a caring and secure environment so that children quickly grow in confidence. The Foundation Stage is well managed with close attention given to developing children's social skills through well organised routines. Children enjoy happy relationships with staff and rapidly develop good learning habits. Activities are well planned and varied with children showing good independent skills as they move to tasks enthusiastically. Their happy smiling faces show clearly their enjoyment of learning. All areas of learning are covered effectively, although outdoor activities have to be held on the main school playground. Although this limits opportunities for extending learning outdoors, staff are coping with the present situation well and there are plans to improve provision. Children enter the Reception with broadly average skills, although these are slightly weaker in language and literacy. Effective assessment procedures ensure that each child's progress is closely monitored. This effective provision results in children making good progress and by the end of Reception most reach the national expectations for their age and some exceed them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.
- Develop tracking procedures that effectively monitor pupils' progress to enable the correct level of support to be given to all pupils.
- Ensure that teachers' marking gives pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve.
- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. There has been a gradual drop in the standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 over the last four years. From a level well above national averages they declined to a level around the national average in 2007. Although this is partly the consequence of the increasing number of pupils entering the school with additional learning needs, standards in Key Stage 1 are not high enough. During this time the standards reached by pupils in the national tests at Year 6 have generally been above average, although they too dipped in 2007 to a level in line with national averages. This was mainly as a result of the movement of pupils to nearby schools in another local authority. Whilst these problems have largely been overcome the school recognised that these results, when compared to pupils' performance at Year 2, indicated some underachievement. The action being taken to redress this situation is proving successful and the underachievement of recent years has been eradicated.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in good attendance levels, engagement and enthusiasm in learning and good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop appreciation of different cultures and beliefs through assemblies and in lessons in religious education, history and geography. They work together well in groups and show good inter-personal skills. Their awareness of right and wrong is good. Pupils say they feel safe and most incidents of disagreements are dealt with quickly. They take on responsibilities that actively contribute to the school and wider community such as through the school council, play-leaders and library monitors and are actively involved in raising money for charity. Pupils show an excellent awareness of the need for a sensible diet and exercise to stay healthy. Their basic skills, positive attitudes to learning, politeness and respect for others provide a good basis for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons proceed at a reasonable pace and have a good blend of well structured and stimulating activities that sustain pupils' interest. In most lessons, tasks are appropriately challenging and the use of inter-active whiteboards stimulates pupils' interest. Clear explanations ensure that they understand what they have to do. As a result pupils respond well and show enthusiasm and enjoyment in lessons. On occasion teachers talk too long and provide little opportunity for the pupils to become involved in independent activities. The effective use of teaching assistants helps pupils with additional learning needs to make steady progress, but some group work with lower ability pupils is too adult-led. Teachers' use of assessment in lessons is varied. They use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding and regularly monitor pupils' work as they circulate in lessons. However, how teachers mark pupils' work does not provide them with clear guidance about how it could be improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The rich curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Close attention is given to the basic skills and other subjects are also covered well, but the linking of these subjects to make learning more relevant for pupils is at an early stage of development and prevents the curriculum from being better than good. Personal development is fostered well through provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils' appreciation and respect of different cultures is promoted well with good use made of speakers for events such as Eid and Black History month. Pupils enthusiastically talk about visits to places of historical interest and how it supports their learning in class. The range of learning opportunities presented to pupils is further enriched through specialist teaching in French. Very good attention is given to keeping fit and healthy through the school's many sporting activities including the 'Altogether Active Week' where students experienced a range of physical challenges. A range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and plays an important role in developing pupils' skills, attitudes and self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All staff are committed to the care of individual pupils and this contributes well to their personal development and well-being. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place. The pastoral support given to pupils is good and the school provides a secure, positive learning environment. Parents find the staff approachable and are pleased at the way children are helped to settle quickly in the Reception class and the care taken of their children throughout the school. Effective arrangements for the pupils' transfer to the next stage of their schooling ensure that this happens smoothly. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for and are confident that there is someone they could go to if they had any problems. Academic guidance is less well developed. Tracking procedures fail to monitor the progress of pupils' achievement closely enough and, although pupils are set short term targets, marking does not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how they can improve in order to achieve these targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses which have contributed to the recent dip in performance. Foremost in these is the failure of monitoring and evaluation procedures to identify accurately the areas needing attention to redress pupils' underachievement. As a result school development planning does not focus strongly enough on strategies to improve pupils' achievement in order to raise standards. Action is now being taken to tackle this and challenging targets for pupils' performance have been set and the deputy headteacher, supported well by staff, is ensuring that the school is working hard to achieve these. The signs are positive, with the current pupils producing work that indicates the targets are accurate and that standards are rising. Links with other providers are good and are supporting pupils' learning well. Governors are well led by the committed chair, who visits the school regularly, but a number of governors are recent appointments and their monitoring role is not so well developed, which makes the contribution by governors satisfactory overall.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

(Inspection of Greave Primary School, Stockport, SK6 1HR)

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and getting your views. It was a pleasure to hear how much you like your teachers and enjoy school. We think Greave Primary is providing you with a satisfactory education, but there are signs that it is improving. This means it does some things well, but other things need to be better.

The staff work hard to make sure you are given lots of interesting things to do so that school really is fun and you really do enjoy learning. Your teachers take good care of you and it was pleasing to hear that you feel safe and secure in school. We were delighted at the way you become progressively more sensible and mature as you progress through the school and were very impressed by your good behaviour. It was also pleasing to hear how much you enjoy the clubs and activities that are made available to you. You all have an excellent understanding of the need to eat a healthy diet and to exercise regularly and are clearly very proud of the fact that the school has achieved the Active Mark and Healthy School Award.

The staff is keen to make sure that you all achieve as well as you are capable of and are working determinedly to ensure this. However, there are some things that the school needs to do better. We have asked the governors and staff to continually check on the work of the school in order to determine areas that need improving. We have also asked them to make sure that they check, in their tracking sheets, how well you are all progressing in your learning. They can then improve the help for those of you who need it. We were pleased to hear that you know your targets and have asked them to make sure that the teachers' marking of your work gives you clear guidance as to how you can improve so that the older pupils' achievement improves. We have also asked them to work hard to ensure that the younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 do better in reading, writing and mathematics. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you were doing in the lessons we observed.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. You are lucky to go to such a warm and friendly school.