

Gosforth Park First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108442
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	309691
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Victor Adams
Headteacher	Mrs Jini Sara
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
School address	Broadway East Off Granville Road Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 5JQ
Telephone number	0191 2852559
Fax number	0191 2135694

Age group	3–9
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2008
Inspection number	309691

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average size first school, situated to the north of Newcastle city centre. Although most pupils live in privately owned housing surrounding the school a small number travel from nearby suburbs preferring the first, middle and high school system. The majority of the pupils are from a White British background with a very small number from a variety of other cultural backgrounds. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is broadly average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average though the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is marginally below average.

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 achieve well, reach well above average standards, and develop mature attitudes, preparing them well for responsibilities and experiences in later life.

Fundamental to the ethos of the school is the headteacher's passionate commitment to the inclusion of all pupils, families and carers. The school provides a warm, friendly welcoming atmosphere in which pupils thrive. The overwhelming majority of parents are delighted with the high quality of care and support their children receive. 'My child is being educated in a caring, nurturing and enabling environment ...' was a comment typical of many parents which demonstrates the extent of confidence and trust in the work of the school.

Pupils achieve well because the school expects them to work conscientiously and commit to doing their best. Their good progress through the school results in a consistent pattern of well above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 4. Reading is an unmistakable strength. New strategies to ensure that learning is more challenging, lively and enjoyable are leading to further improvements in writing skills. Pupils become confident and skilled learners as a result of good teaching. Following the introduction of the 'Big Write' initiative, marking in English is effective because it sets targets and offers explicit advice to pupils as to how to improve their work. In other subjects, marking does not provide sufficient guidance for improvement. Not all opportunities are taken to involve pupils in the assessment of their own performance. In a few lessons, teaching lacks sufficient pace and challenge for all pupils. The good curriculum has a strong emphasis on literacy and creative activities and a good emphasis on numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Classroom learning is enriched effectively by using a range of first hand learning experiences including residential visits.

There is a strong commitment to remove any barriers to learning. Pupils' happiness, enjoyment and confidence are evident throughout the day. Good learning support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils for whom English is an additional language. This ensures that their progress is good in line with other pupils. Pupils flourish on the opportunities provided to take responsibility and participate in school activities.

Leadership and management are good. Parents and carers value the headteachers' passionate belief that all pupils be given every opportunity to achieve their best regardless of background or starting point. The headteacher, effectively supported by the governing body, has strengthened leadership and management. Confidence and skills of subject leaders are being nurtured, helping them to evaluate performance in their subjects more effectively. This is adding to their capacity to raise achievement. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The school offers good value for money. The capacity to continue to improve is good and strengthening.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. On entry to the Nursery most children display skills that are typical for their age. Children make good progress and by the end of Reception the large majority reach standards higher than those expected for their age. Children's confidence and independence are progressively developed. The good teaching coupled with caring relationships and good support has a positive effect on children's early learning. Well led and

managed teaching engages children across all areas of learning. Day-to-day assessment of children's progress is used by staff to identify the individual needs of children and plan learning. Outdoor provision has been thoughtfully developed though it is not used systematically enough to broaden the range of children's learning experiences. Overall, activities are adequately matched to the interests of children. However, too many tasks in Reception are directed by adults which limits opportunities for children to initiate learning for themselves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a better balance between tasks directed by adults and learning initiated by children in Reception classes, and improve the use of outdoor facilities.
- Ensure that teaching consistently provides pace and challenge for all pupils.
- Make sure that teachers' marking helps pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve the quality of their work in all their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress. Over the past five years, overall standards have been consistently well above average at the end of Year 2. In 2007 reading standards were exceptionally high, a clear indication of what pupils can achieve. Evidence from the inspection and the school's own tracking data indicates that current Year 2 pupils are in line to reach well above average standards in 2008. Recently introduced strategies to motivate pupils to extend their writing skills are narrowing the gap between reading and writing standards. However, the improved extended writing skills are not yet fully exploited in all subjects. Good progress is sustained in Years 3 and 4 with overall standards well above average, particularly in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The well-being of pupils lies at the heart of all that the school does. Pupils say that they feel very safe, are happy and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good attendance. Their mature, safe and sensible attitudes are obvious in their cooperative, exceptionally well mannered and considerate behaviour. Relationships with adults and fellow pupils are excellent. This contributes much to the positive climate for learning. Pupils exhibit a good awareness and grasp of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They manage their responsibilities well, for example, acting as playground friends and being a member of the 'Green Team'. They are keen to take decisions and implement their own ideas. They are enthusiastic when raising money for charity, whether for local, national or international causes. Learning about other lifestyles and cultures helps pupils develop tolerance and prepares them well for life in a diverse society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and as a result pupils learn at a good rate. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this successfully to ensure pupils make good progress expanding their

knowledge and broadening their understanding. In most lessons pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and assessment information is used effectively to match task to ability. Coupled with the use of more imaginative approaches, progress accelerates. In a few lessons, teaching is more methodical, support is less pro-active and challenge and pace slip. Consequently, pupils' concentration drifts and progress slows. Teachers' marking is good in English but not helpful enough in some other subjects. When pupils are taught to assess their own work they are clear about what to do next and how to improve the quality of their work, which accelerates their progress. Teaching assistant experience and skill is deployed proficiently to provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English for the first time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is being steadily improved through the development of themed topics that include work across many subjects. This is refreshing approaches and making learning more interesting. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. There is good provision for the development of creative skills. There is strong emphasis on provision for literacy skills and good emphasis on numeracy and ICT skills. Much progress has been made developing ICT provision since the last inspection, but not all opportunities are taken to develop higher level ICT skills in all subjects. Successful use is made of partnerships with local schools to enhance learning, for example integrating sport development and Italian teaching into the curriculum. Effective personal, social and emotional programmes help pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance make a positive contribution to pupils achieving well and developing very good personal qualities. Pastoral care is excellent. The very supportive family atmosphere created by the school, boosted by strong links with parents, contributes to staff knowing their pupils exceptionally well. Procedures to safeguard children with routines for child protection and health and safety are in place. In English especially, information on how well pupils are progressing is used to identify possible underachievement, target intervention, and set challenging targets. This approach although improving, is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is instrumental in maintaining a very caring ethos. This is not only reflected in the quality of care and support for pupils but also in the strength of staff commitment. The school self-evaluation accurately identifies the correct priorities. Recent staff appointments have strengthened leadership. Subject leaders are developing a greater awareness of the importance of evaluating the impact and quality of all that they do. The headteacher is rightly developing their role and responsibilities so that together approaches to both monitoring and evaluation are more rigorous and consistent. The early impact of their work is showing through in imaginative approaches to teaching and the use of challenging targets to improve writing. The same level of challenge is not evident in pupils' targets in other subjects. Governance is good. Governors hold the school to account

and recognise the value of maintaining regular checks to ensure that all pupils are doing as well as they possibly can.

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

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
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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.

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

27 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Gosforth Park First School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 5JQ

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome to your school and for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we met with you. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your headteacher, staff, parents and governors and joining you in your lessons and in assembly. You go to a good school in which there are many things you should be proud of.

When we spoke to you, you told us that you really enjoy coming to school, joining in the many activities and being with your friends. Your enthusiasm and eagerness to learn in lessons and your sensible behaviour shows that you enjoy school life. We were extremely pleased to see you getting on really well with each other and staff. Your parents and carers also told us how pleased they were with the way the school cares for you and makes sure any concerns or worries you have are dealt with promptly.

The most recent checks on progress show that pupils in Gosforth Park First School continue to do well. Your high standard of reading is now being matched with improved writing. This is very good news and of course, everyone is very pleased with your hard work. In Nursery and Reception, younger children continue to make good progress although there are times when they could work more on their own. In lessons, you are keen to learn and respond well to the challenges that are set by your teachers. In a few lessons some of you need even more challenge to help you to learn at a faster pace. Occasionally, some of you are unsure as to how you can improve the quality of your work. For these reasons, we have asked the school to make sure that improvements are made so that all of you from Reception to Year 4 can do even better.

Don't forget you have a very important part to play improving your school. You can help by always listening carefully to the advice of your teachers and helpers and by trying extra hard to produce the best work that you possibly can in all lessons.

We hope the school will continue to build on its successes. Best of luck for the future!

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector