

Spring Gardens Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108574
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	309726
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Brigid Nelson
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Baines
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Brightman Road North Shields Tyne and Wear NE29 0HP
Telephone number	0191 2005263
Fax number	0191 2005270

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress that pupils are currently making this year, especially in mathematics
- the extent of pupils' personal development and well-being
- the effectiveness of procedures for setting targets with pupils, marking, assessment and supporting their learning.

The inspector gathered evidence from the school's own self-evaluation, lesson observations; looking at pupils' work; assessment information; school documents; and discussions with staff, a governor and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves families in North Shields. The locality is mixed in socio-economic character with some areas of considerable deprivation. A well above average proportion of pupils take free school meals. A broadly average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement for special educational need. Almost all pupils have a White British heritage. A small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds and some are learning English as an additional language. The school has the Healthy Schools, Activemark and Developing Internationalism awards, along with an accreditation for work in improving speech and language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Spring Gardens Primary School provides a good education for its pupils and is improving in all aspects of its work. Pupils' achievement, and their personal development and well-being are good. The very effective leadership of the headteacher, ably assisted by his senior team, successfully promotes the school's principal goals of 'Caring, Learning, Achieving' through a clear philosophy that every child does matter. Pupils are proud to be part of promoting these principles and the school values their individual contributions. One pupil was delighted to say he liked the school because it is 'fun and colourful'. The great majority of parents appreciate the work of the school. A typical comment was 'Spring Gardens has a nice atmosphere and feels like a safe environment. We have always found the teachers approachable and helpful. We are pleased with our child's progress. Parents are kept well informed of events as well as any changes or concerns that may affect them'.

Good teaching and learning result in pupils achieving well. From well below average starting points pupils make good progress and achieve well. In the 2007 national tests for Year 6 pupils, results were broadly average overall and better in English and science than in mathematics. Pupils achieved outstandingly well in English and science but did not make as good progress in mathematics, especially at the higher Level 5. The school has properly identified mathematics as a key area for attention, particularly its use in practical contexts. The work already started has improved standards through strategies to support lower attaining pupils.

The school is successful in helping pupils to develop a very positive outlook on life, to gain confidence and to have a desire to care for others. It offers a wide range of activities which contribute together to make their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development good. Assemblies, links with the church, the local and international community and music and art all contribute markedly to their good spiritual and cultural development. Pupils know the importance of good health and fitness; they are full of energy in physical education and many take part in voluntary sports and activities. They act safely in and out-of-doors. Pupils behave impeccably in classrooms, and are keen to contribute in lessons where they work with avid enthusiasm for learning. These are vital factors in the good progress many make. Pupils speak politely, and show care and respect for each other. Good participation in after-school clubs, the way pupils talk willingly and confidently about their school life reflect how much they enjoy school. Pupils make good contributions to the community, for example, through their school council and their charitable work. Their social and basic skills develop well, and the close working arrangements with the business community develops enterprise skills effectively. This ensures that pupils are well-prepared for their future lives.

Good achievement, and personal development and well-being, result from an effective combination of good teaching and support, and an effective curriculum. Activities are well-suited to pupils' abilities and they provide interest, challenge and support their learning. Pupils know clearly what is expected of them and work earnestly and industriously. Teachers, support staff and helpers work well together, plan carefully and ensure everyone, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning the English language, take a full part in lessons and achieve well. The new, common approach to teachers' marking congratulates pupils on their accomplishments, and gives pointers to improvement. Occasionally, marking does not take enough account of the targets individual pupils' are working towards in English and mathematics so opportunities to give pupils feedback on their progress towards them are missed. The school strikes a good balance of work in English, mathematics and science with

other subjects. Computing facilities enhance learning in many areas. Displays and photographic records include some excellent work and reflect the contribution of visits and visitors and the wide range of out-of-school activities. These, and excellent partnerships with parents, external agencies and communities at home and abroad all play a key part in extending and widening pupils' academic and personal development.

The school values each child as an individual and follows their progress carefully. It uses the new assessment tracking procedures effectively to identify where help is needed. Pupils at risk of falling behind receive specific support to overcome their particular difficulties. These pupils make very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has plans to extend the use of the tracking systems to challenge pupils further, particularly in mathematics. Clear up-to-date procedures safeguard the welfare of pupils and meet current government requirements.

The headteacher and governors lead and manage well. They work harmoniously together to make best use of their resources. Their careful allocation of funds has successfully overcome a budget shortfall. As a result of detailed analysis and diligent monitoring they have a clear and accurate picture of the school's work. The school is justifiably proud of recently improved arrangements to promote pupils' achievement and, through a well thought out development plan, important improvements in mathematics particularly have been put into effect this year. The school follows a thorough process to set ambitious targets based upon pupils' prior attainments. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The governors' and headteacher's leadership and clear determination to raise achievement and standards make their ambitious goals within reach. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children join the nursery their abilities are well below those typical for their age, particularly in their communication and language skills. Parents of new starters are delighted with the way their children settle and enjoy school. Of particular note is the way children become engrossed in activities and very happily contribute when learning in a group. Teaching and learning are outstanding as are the leadership and management. There is a clear focus on developing speaking and listening skills and children are keen to respond to questions. A good example of this was seen in Reception when the children, including those who are learning to speak English, enthusiastically showed how well they could play Picture Lotto. Planning is high quality and ensures that the outstanding expertise of the teaching team is deployed efficiently to provide high quality learning in both the indoor and outdoor facilities. Children thrive and make good and sometimes outstanding progress, especially in developing aspects of literacy. This is due to the school's partnership with the Local Authority and involvement in the Narrative Project. Most leave the Reception year with skills and abilities close to those expected for their age. They are very well placed to move on to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to use and apply aspects of the mathematics curriculum in real-life situations.
- Challenge more able pupils in mathematics more effectively.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spring Gardens Primary School, North Tyneside, NE29 0HP

I really enjoyed my visit to your school this week. Thank you for helping me when I came into your assembly and classrooms to see you at work. I did enjoy talking with those of you whom I met. You were very well-behaved, polite and really helpful. It was really good to see how confident you are, how much you enjoy coming to school and taking part in all the different activities, how you value the friendships you make, and how much you contribute to school life. I agree with your headteacher and all the staff when they say that they are very proud of you.

Yours is a good school. It is very warm and welcoming and well organised. I agree with you that your school has very colourful displays of all your work in the halls, classrooms and along the corridors. They really brighten the school. I know that you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you really well. Your lessons are good and some are very good. I was impressed with the way you work very hard and like to take part in lessons. Those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes really do well and enjoy the activities and learn a great deal. The rest of you in Years 1 to 6 are doing well and making good progress. Last year, most pupils in Year 6 did really well in English and science, but not as well as they should have in mathematics. Your school is going to help all of you to reach higher standards in mathematics, especially those who are capable of reaching the very highest levels. I have asked the school to give you lots of chances to learn about mathematics in practical situations to help you to understand better. You can do your best to enjoy this work and continue to work hard in this subject.

You have very many opportunities at Spring Gardens Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector