

Preston Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108578
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	309728
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mel Leitch
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Watts (Acting Head)
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
School address	Chiltern Road Preston Grange North Shields Tyne and Wear NE29 9QL
Telephone number	0191 200 6347
Fax number	0191 200 1080

Age group	4-11
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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 consistency of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, the quality and impact of academic guidance and the effectiveness of the school's development planning. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons; analyses of pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaires and the school's documentation including the school's self-evaluation; and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. 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 this report.

Description of the school

This school mainly serves a residential area of North Tyneside where socio-economic conditions are broadly average. Pupils come increasingly from outside the immediate area. The great majority of pupils are from White British families; about 5% speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is 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. Parents agree. It is 'a friendly, well run school' according to one parent, in a comment typical of many. Good leadership is ensuring that it is maintaining its equilibrium and sense of direction during a prolonged period without a headteacher and with some staffing issues. Overall, provision remains as good as it was at the last inspection and standards are consistently above average at all levels of the school. In fact, the acting headteacher, senior staff and governors have done well to add new systems to strengthen its provision where appropriate. For example, they have streamlined procedures for monitoring pupils' progress.

Preston Grange is a happy school where pupils enjoy learning and mature into well balanced and thoughtful individuals. Their personal development is good and some elements, such as behaviour, are outstanding. Pupils are at ease with one another. Playtime outside, for instance, is harmonious and behaviour in lessons is hard to fault even when the subject matter is not very stimulating. Relationships between all members of the school are strong, so cooperation in class work is productive. Pupils feel very safe and valued by all staff, because the pastoral care is sensitive. In turn, they become very aware of their own safety and that of others. Setting out benches in assembly, for example, was done without fuss and extremely sensibly. Through the school council and other roles, pupils develop a good sense of citizenship.

All pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average in all main subjects year on year, and look set to remain so in the current year. The school is understandably keen to make pupils' writing as good as their reading although writing is not a significant weakness. Overall, pupils' good basic skills mean that they are well prepared for the next phase of their life.

Whilst the quality of teaching varies to some degree, it is essentially good in each key stage. The positive ethos in each classroom stems from teachers' good organisational skills that ensure lessons run smoothly and time is used well. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so that pupils learn in an orderly atmosphere. Lessons have clear aims that are shared with pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons. A variety of approaches including the imaginative use of interactive whiteboards and other resources successfully reinforces learning. Although teachers plan carefully they do not consistently make use of their knowledge of pupils' prior learning or the data now available from the new tracking system. As a result, pupils' work is not always tailored to their individual needs so that they can make even better progress.

The curriculum provides well for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children in the Foundation Stage. It focuses on key skills and follows national guidelines for each subject. Pupils achieve well and the school has ensured a balance is maintained between academic and practical activities. Nevertheless, aspects of the curriculum could be richer and more diverse. On the other hand, visits add that extra excitement to the curriculum. They are used well to exploit skills in a purposeful way that makes learning more effective. Subjects are not always shrewdly linked, for example, to develop technical vocabulary in English. The school's promotion of a healthy lifestyle, especially through sports clubs after school, is effective. However, some lunchboxes indicate a few pupils do not always follow the school's advice.

The school takes satisfactory care of its pupils. The school complies with government requirements to safeguard pupils. The security of the site is good, first aid provision is effective and staff are well trained in child protection. However, some procedures and documentation have not received enough attention during the transitional period through which the school is going, and now need updating. Nevertheless, on a day to day basis the care for the pupils is good. They know that teachers respond readily to their needs, whether medical or emotional.

Some parents are understandably concerned that the school lacks a substantive headteacher. They feel that the school requires strong leadership, although they praise the work of the acting headteacher – rightly. The leadership has done well to keep the school on an even keel through what is a slightly unsettling time and have succeeded in ensuring that pupils have not suffered. The school knows, though, that there are still issues to resolve. Attendance, for example, whilst satisfactory is not as high as it could be mainly because of holidays taken during term time. The school's self-evaluation is objective and thoughtful so its priorities to improve the school are relevant ones. However, its action plans are not as detailed and honed as they might be.

Steered by the new management team, the school is pulling together well and is well supported in its work by the governing body. Governors are heavily involved and offer good expertise. Most parents are well aware of the good job the school is doing. They praise the school's atmosphere and know that their children prosper. One parent's comment echoed many others: 'Children become confident, well rounded and intelligent individuals.' Because of its resilience, the maintenance of good standards and combined strength of the leadership, the school shows that it has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class gives children a good start to their education. Teaching is lively and appropriate to children's needs. It encourages them to learn through play and discovery, and also ensures that key basic skills are acquired well. With the changing nature of the school population, attainment on entry is now fairly typical of four-year-olds. By the end of the Reception year, children exceed expectations for their age in all areas of learning; elements of language and calculation are marginally lower. Children develop positive attitudes to learning, although the school is aware of the urgent need to improve the outside learning area. In a safe environment, children develop good interpersonal skills and an ability to work independently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment data are used more consistently in teachers' planning.
- Establish a curriculum that is more diverse and stimulating.
- Ensure that all policies are fully up to date.

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Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness

Achievement and standards

Personal development and well-being

The quality of provision

Leadership and management

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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?	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	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?	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?	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	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

Age group

4–11

Inspection date(s)

28 February 2008

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Preston Grange Primary School, North Tyneside, NE29 9QL

I am writing to thank you very much for the welcome and help you gave to me when I visited your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know your school. As I told those of you I met, your views are very important.

I agree with you that yours is a good school. It is a happy, relaxed place where you all work hard, get on extremely well together and develop into fine young people. You are right to feel safe because all the adults know you well and look after your interests and well-being. In turn, you develop a good sense of responsibility and are thoughtful towards others. I found your behaviour hard to fault. I liked the way you sustain good concentration in class, even when sometimes the activity is not very thrilling.

You respond well to the good teaching throughout the school and so achieve well. Standards are above average in all parts of the school, and in all subjects. Well done. I have asked the school, though, to make sure that all your learning is always based on what you already know and can do, so that you do not spend time on work that is too easy. Although most lessons use resources well to make lessons stimulating I have asked the school to make all of your learning more varied and interesting.

I think that all the staff, but especially Mrs Watts, the senior staff and the governors, have done a good job in keeping the school in good shape since your headteacher left. They have worked hard to make sure that the school runs smoothly and have improved some things. A few matters, such as checking on school policies, have been overlooked, but nothing serious and I know the school is very keen to keep everything up to date.

You were so happy with your school that you struggled to think of how the school could be better. I understand that but I hope that my suggestions will help your school to become even stronger.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector