

Grangetown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108758
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	309792
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Catcherside
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Gale
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Spelter Works Road Grangetown Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR2 8PX
Telephone number	0191 5537647
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Grangetown Primary School is average in size and caters for pupils who come from areas with higher than average levels of social and economic deprivation. There are significantly more pupils entitled to free school meals than found nationally, as there is for those designated as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although there is a very small number, who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Grangetown Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory and improving standard of education. It has made progress in many areas since the previous inspection, but the most notable changes have occurred in 2007.

The school has suffered from disruption to its staffing in recent times, due to ill-health and a transitional period when there was no permanent headteacher in post. The school has successfully overcome almost all of these difficulties and has now established a firm foundation of provision for all pupils and a culture of wanting to improve and raise standards. The appointment of a new headteacher in January of this year has been a significant factor in recent developments, but the contribution and willingness of staff and governors to make changes in the ways they work have also been very important to the recent improvements made in the school. This period of transition is not yet finished. Recent teacher appointments link very well with the vision that the headteacher has for the school, giving a satisfactory but promising capacity to improve in the future. Governors and other managers throughout the school are well positioned to push through further developments that will help raise the overall profile of the school, and continue the trend of recent improvements.

Standards are improving. The vast majority of children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Foundation Stage so that by the time they start Key Stage 1, they show the range of skills, personal attributes and abilities typical for a five year-old child. At the end of Key Stage 1 in Year 2, standards are average in mathematics and reading, and in the latest results above average in writing. Standards are very close to average when the pupils leave Grangetown and transfer to local secondary schools, although last year there was underperformance of boys in English. The school is alert to this issue and is taking positive action to address the identified weaknesses. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily against suitable challenging and better defined and realistic targets.

Grangetown is a caring school that places the pupils at the forefront of its work. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and underpin the good quality support and guidance that the pupils receive. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance satisfactory. Those pupils who spoke with inspectors were very clear that they enjoyed the range of different activities on offer, both in and out of lessons. The pupils feel confident that there is always an adult to whom they can talk about any issue, which makes them feel well cared for and safe. These characteristics are seen throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some is good, with indications that there is an improving trend across the school. Pupils learn and make good progress in lessons that are suited to their abilities, and those where the teachers make it very clear what they will teach and what they expect from pupils. In these lessons, teachers check constantly to ensure that everyone is on task, and give good quality oral and written feedback to help pupils to improve their work. However, lessons that are satisfactory create the inevitable consequence that some pupils' progress slows down because their abilities are not challenged sufficiently in their work. Procedures and processes for assessment are improving, and a recent initiative that has focused on teachers' marking and assessment of writing are helping teachers to gain a clearer idea of pupils' standards and the progress they are making. However, assessment is still at a relatively early stage of development, and doesn't yet include all subjects taught. There have also been some recent developments in assessment in the Foundation Stage, which are helping the

teachers to know, more accurately, the levels that the children have achieved by the time they start in the main school at Key Stage 1. This is so recent, however, and has yet to be fully developed and implemented in such a way that the data obtained are used to inform future planning and learning experiences across all areas in the Foundation Stage.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The quality of the curricular provision is developing through a more focused approach on planning learning experiences that match well with the children's age and stage of development. Long, medium, and short-term planning satisfactorily identifies a suitable range of Early Learning Goals in each of the six areas of learning. A more robust baseline assessment of the children's abilities indicates that when they start in the Nursery, they possess levels of personal skills, attributes and abilities just below those typical for their age. Teaching is mostly satisfactory, occasionally good. The most effective work occurs when the children work closely with, and often under the direct supervision of an adult. This applies, in particular, to the whole-class plenary or carpet sessions where there is direct teaching and effective questioning of the pupils. Although the children who work independently of adults enjoy their work, some tend to drift off-task and, as a result, their progress slows. Overall, the quality of the Foundation Stage provision enables the children to settle into, and know school routines well, which helps them to develop their personal and social skills, and enables them to make satisfactory progress. By the time they enter Year 1, the vast majority of children are close to the levels typical for their age in all areas of learning. Accommodation and resources are of a very high standard overall. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Recent developments are at an early stage of implementation because a new assistant headteacher and Foundation Stage leader will not start at the school until the beginning of the spring term. Young children with learning difficulties and/disabilities, including those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress because of the targeted and specialist adult support available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of boys' English at Key Stage 2.
- Develop further the assessment and recording of children's performance at the end of the Foundation Stage as an aid to informing teachers' planning.
- Develop further the assessment and tracking procedures to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can across all the subjects taught.

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

Although the school has, until this year, fallen short of its Key Stage 2 targets, there have been year-on-year improvements since the previous inspection, and standards are now satisfactory at the end of both key stages. The vast majority of children start at the school in Nursery with a range of skills just below those typical for children of that age. During the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress across all the areas of learning so that by the time they

reach the start of Key Stage 1, the vast majority have the skills and knowledge typical for a five year-old child. The latest results available show that at Key Stage 1, writing is above average and reading and mathematics in line. These latest results also show that at Key Stage 2, the overall standard in the combined core subjects is average, but below for boys in English. Although overall progress is below that seen in 2006, it is satisfactory overall. Those pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve satisfactorily relative to their capabilities, including those at an early stage of learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils enjoy their education, in particular the two hours of physical activity each week and the new foods on offer from the salad bar, which underlines the school's commitment to making pupils aware of the need to be healthy. Behaviour is good because of the strenuous efforts of all staff to establish expectations of positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils appreciate the good opportunities they have to learn from, and with, others in the school community and beyond. Pupils feel free from bullying and other forms of harassment, including racism. These, and other related matters, are discussed in lessons and assemblies and lead to pupils saying they feel confident that any incidents would be quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils say that their views are sought and that the school has acted to provide more extra-curricular clubs, making them feel that they are listened to and are important. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future, with Year 6 pupils, for example, saying that they felt the smooth transition to secondary school is already being undertaken. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which enhance learning opportunities across the curriculum. As they mature, the pupils take responsibility for others by becoming a prefect, or through the work of the school council, which includes helping with staff appointments.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, occasionally good. Satisfactory lessons produce satisfactory pupil progress, but where lessons reach a higher standard, pupils engage well with the tasks set, they show interest and are motivated to learn, and their progress is good. Teachers' planning is generally good across the main school, and satisfactory but developing in the Foundation Stage. Teachers' explanation of lesson content is always appropriate to the needs of the pupils, and includes a helpful sharing of learning objectives at the beginning of every lesson. In the best lessons, teachers question pupils to test their understanding, as well as reminding them of what they are trying to achieve, and how successfully they are progressing towards the lesson objectives. There is an increasing use of interactive whiteboards by teachers, to which the pupils respond very positively. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their learning, and are attentive and well behaved. Pupils show respect by listening carefully to others' views, although there are a few occasions when pupils' enthusiasm causes them to speak out of turn, or interrupt others when talking. Teaching assistants and teachers work well together, and provide appropriate support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The additional support for those pupils at an early stage of learning English is good. Teachers mark pupils

work consistently, although the extent to which they offer comments for further improvement varies in quality. However, the school's recent development of its 'quality marking' scheme in literacy is good, and helpful in informing pupils about the quality of their work, and what they need to do to improve. This initiative is raising the profile of marking, and is helping the pupils to make better progress in their literacy work. The quality of assessment overall is improving, particularly in writing, where regular assessments are helping to pinpoint the progress made by pupils. However, the use of assessment across all areas of the curriculum is underdeveloped, and is beginning to take a sharper focus in the Foundation Stage.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is developing well, particularly in the provision for English, through the efforts of the leadership team who are well-supported by the local authority. It is also broad and balanced because it covers all requirements of the National Curriculum, and caters for the full range of pupils' capabilities and needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum gives a satisfactory start to children's education, and throughout the school there is sufficient emphasis on developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the more able and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Grouping according to ability is leading to improved standards in literacy because the work is accurately reflecting the abilities of the pupils. The provision is also enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, themed weeks, and by visits and visitors to the school that help to extend pupils' learning. The school is working strenuously to provide good quality instrumental lessons to the high proportion of pupils who sign up for them. All of these additional activities are enjoyed by the pupils, and are helping to build good team spirit and positive self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The welfare of the pupils is given a high priority within the school, and high quality staff-pupil relationships underpin a range of good support structures in and out of lessons, which means that pupils feel well cared for and safe. Parents understand and appreciate this support, knowing that if they ever need to approach the school, staff are, as one parent said, 'friendly and approachable'. Pupils indicate that they can always talk to their class teacher, or another adult in school, if they have any personal or work-related worries. The school's guidance for pupils in relation to the work that they do, and the monitoring of their progress are both developing satisfactorily, which is helpful to parents and pupils, and also to teachers because it helps them to know when to give the right level of challenge and support in lessons. The policies for child protection and bullying are of a satisfactory quality, and contribute to the good quality safeguarding procedures across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Strong leadership from the headteacher is giving impetus to improving standards, through carrying out a range of self-evaluation activities that have led to the school having a thorough and an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This has led to a

clear and focused school improvement plan that emphasises raising standards through better teaching and learning. A carefully planned programme of professional development, for teachers and teaching assistants, is leading to the establishment of a strong team approach to understanding assessment and tracking pupils' progress, although this applies more to writing than to the other curricular areas taught. Pupils are seeing the benefit of this system in an improvement of the marking of their work in literacy, and the written advice they get telling them how to improve, although these strategies have yet to be implemented more broadly across the subject range. A further school-based initiative has seen discipline improve because teachers are adopting a more consistent approach when dealing with any potentially disruptive behaviour. The recent outcomes achieved, and the willingness of the school to change the way it works in order to bring about further improvements, indicates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Leadership has successfully managed the many recent staffing difficulties, most due to ill-health. During the last year, governors have acquired a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development through improved communication procedures with senior leaders and managers in the school, and the local authority. The school meets the requirements for monitoring racial equality in all that it does, which has helped give a sharper focus to the provision being made for those pupils learning English as an additional language. Parents have a high level of satisfaction with how the school is moving forward. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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	3
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	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	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?	3
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?	3
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	3
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

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grangetown Primary School, Sunderland.

You will know that I recently visited your school with two other inspectors to find out how well you are doing in your lessons and in the other activities you do in school. Thank you for making the visit so enjoyable for me and my colleagues.

We watched you in lessons, as well as talking to your teachers, reading lots of information about the school and, most importantly, talking to as many of you as possible about being a pupil at Grangetown School. You probably want to know what we thought about your school, so here are a few details that I hope you will share with your parents.

The staff at the school work hard to care and support you in all that you do. Lessons are helping you to learn, and teachers are encouraging you to do the very best that you can. Many of you are beginning to realise that you can be very successful at school with good attendance, listening carefully to what the teachers say and working hard to produce really good work. I know that some of you do not always find the work easy, but you must continue to try your very hardest and show both your parents and teachers what you have learned. If you do all of these things, you will be as successful as the Year 6 pupils who left your school at the end of last July, although for some of you, particularly boys, better work is needed in English.

As inspectors, we always try to help schools improve, so we have spoken with your teachers about a few things they should do in order to help all of you achieve the very best that you can in all that you do at school. These include:

- raising the standards of boys' English at Key Stage 2
- asking your teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes to collect as much information as they can about how well you are doing. This should help them plan exciting and interesting lessons in both these classes
- asking your teachers to collect information about how well you are doing in all the different subjects you are taught at school, and to use this information to help you get even better.

Finally, I should like to thank all of those parents who returned the inspection survey. Many wanted us to know what they thought about the school, so we read all of these forms very carefully.

I hope you all continue to enjoy school.

Brian Blake

Lead inspector

On behalf of the inspection team