

Usworth Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108822
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	309807
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Les Cash
Headteacher	Mr John Busfield
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Marlborough Road Sulgrave Village Washington Tyne and Wear NE37 3BG
Telephone number	0191 2193825
Fax number	0191 2193829

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Usworth Grange Primary school is an average size school. It serves a predominantly White British population with a small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. An above average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school throughout the year varies considerably from year to year. The school houses one local authority unit, which cater for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Usworth Grange Primary School is a good school. It provides good teaching and learning, an effective curriculum and good care, support and guidance. Leadership and management are also good. As a result, pupils achieve well and their personal development is good. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. All issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been tackled and improved effectively.

The school is much loved by pupils and parents, one of whom commented that, 'Everyone from the cleaning staff to the headteacher are second to none,' and that all children are, 'not only encouraged to achieve educationally but to be "good people" as well'.

Children enter Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age. They develop skills at a good rate and make good progress. However, by the end of Reception their development is still below that expected for their age, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Good progress is maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that pupils achieve well to reach standards in Year 6 that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the special unit, are fully integrated into school life and achieve as well as all other pupils. Standards in writing have improved recently at the upper end of Key Stage 2 as a result of new initiatives, but there is more scope to extend these throughout the school.

Pupils' enjoy being at school and behave well. They feel safe and secure in school. They develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and the importance of having plenty of exercise. They make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Pupils are well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their education.

The good teaching is typified by careful planning for pupils of different abilities, high expectations and strong relationships between staff and pupils. However, teachers' marking sometimes does not give enough guidance for pupils on how they can improve their work, particularly in mathematics. The good curriculum gives a high priority to pupils' personal, social and health education alongside developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is the foundation of the good progress pupils make in their academic and personal development. A good range of additional activities, visits and visitors to school enriches pupils' progress and personal development. The curriculum in the unit is good and reflects the specialised learning needs of the pupils well. The school tracks and reviews pupils' progress carefully, especially in English, as part of its support procedures. Pupils are very involved in this process.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear vision for development, based on effective monitoring and they accurately identified writing and mathematics as future priorities. Overall, the school has a good capacity for further improvement and currently provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter with levels of development well below those typical for their age. Although children make good progress, by the end of Reception their skills are below those expected for their age, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Children make good progress in all areas of the curriculum, and they enjoy their learning and settle quickly into well-established routines. In both Nursery and Reception attractive environments

are created which celebrate children's achievements and encourage them to be more independent. Highly skilled staff provide a good balance of activities between those directed by adults and those initiated by the children, both inside and outdoors. Together with systematic assessment, these activities ensure children's good development towards nationally agreed goals. Individual needs are identified early and appropriate strategies put in place. There is a strong partnership with parents. They find the school very approachable and are kept well informed about their children's progress and current learning. Basic skills are well taught and the children learn how to cooperate with others, showing courtesy and consideration.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the best practice in developing writing skills is extended across the school in order to improve standards in writing further.
- Improve the effectiveness of marking in mathematics so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' current work and the school's data show that standards are broadly average by Year 6 and achievement is good. Most children start in Nursery well below the level of development typical for children for their age, particularly in language and number. Although children make good progress in Nursery and Reception their skills are generally below those expected nationally by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. In the 2007 assessment tests, standards of reading and mathematics were slightly below average although reading had improved on previous years. Standards in writing were below average. However, this cohort was particularly small with a large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently, pupils' progress in writing is improving because of the recent introduction of successful strategies and the increased opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in all subjects.

In Key Stage 2, progress continues to be good. By Year 6, the work of mainstream pupils is broadly in line with national averages. This is reflected in the 2007 assessment tests. The results also show the gap has narrowed between reading and writing when compared with previous years and standards in writing are improving. This is because Years 5 and 6 have benefited from a longer period using more focused writing strategies. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, both in the local authority's unit and in the mainstream school, achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils behave well. They show respect for staff and form good friendships with each other. Pupils know that nutritious food, regular exercise and participation in clubs will keep them happy and healthy. Pupils feel safe at school because they are confident with school staff 'who always listen and give good advice'. They appreciate the need to be vigilant outside school and know that the 'stranger danger' message also applies when they are accessing the Internet.

Pupils enjoy school and the experiences it offers. When asked about favourite subjects a group of pupils cited many. They have very positive attitudes in lessons. They show great enthusiasm when singing songs from other cultures. Their contribution to community events is also good. The choir enjoy singing carols at the local shopping mall. Pupils also participate in fund raising such as the 'Children in Need Appeal'. Pupils are confident when expressing an opinion because they know their views will be listened to. They think the school council represented their own views very well when choosing equipment for an adventure playground.

The school prepares pupils well for adult life. They experience teamwork; they learn about different careers and participate in business enterprise programmes. They develop sound basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, both in the main school and the unit. It is regularly monitored and evaluated by the staff team. As a result, ideas are shared and planning is consistent across the school. The staff have good subject knowledge, are well organised and give clear explanations. In all classrooms, relationships are good and staff motivate pupils well. This makes pupils very keen to participate in the interesting activities teachers provide for them. These characteristics were most apparent in an outstanding music lesson where pupils used body, voice and instruments to create background music for the story of Noah's Ark.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning. Where teachers provide opportunities throughout the day to promote basic skills, these are well taught ensuring consolidation and a variety of applications. This good practice is not fully in place across the school. Overall, work is well matched to ability, especially when different tasks are devised. Very occasionally, the more able pupils are not challenged enough and opportunities to extend their learning are limited. Pupils benefit from good pupil/teacher ratios and frequent individual or small group support. Teachers' marking in English provides clear instructions on how pupils can improve their work, but they do not receive as much direction in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. It is broad, relevant and gives priority to basic literacy and numeracy skills alongside personal, social and emotional education. It includes French, enterprise activities and brass instrumental tuition. ICT is used effectively across the curriculum and provides successful individual programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers are beginning to create more writing opportunities across topics and pupils are becoming more confident with different styles and purposes. For example, pupils in Year 6 write clearly about experiments using appropriate technical language. This good practice is not yet consistent enough across the school.

The enrichment programme is good. The school gives all Year 6 pupils the opportunity to stay in a London hotel, to visit famous landmarks and to see a live theatre production. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are often oversubscribed. These include singing, gymnastics, athletics and football. The choir, led by music specialists, is a very popular option and has established a good reputation for performances in public settings.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support of pupils is good. The guidance they receive is satisfactory. Child protection procedures are in place and staff are given relevant training. The school has effective policies for monitoring behaviour and health and safety. Risk assessments are thorough. The school has established good links with external agencies that make good contributions to all pupils' well-being both in the main school and the units.

The school tracks and reviews pupil progress well and, as a result, matches resources to individual needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported sensitively. The provision of catch-up programmes for literacy and numeracy enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. Currently, pupils have a very clear understanding of what they can do in writing and what they need to do to make further progress. There is more scope to extend this good practice to other subjects, particularly mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher ensures that the school is a safe, caring environment where all pupils achieve well. He stresses the importance of pupils having stimulating experiences across the curriculum. Staff and governors share this vision and work well as a team to achieve it. The headteacher ensures that all staff are valued and have opportunities for personal development. They are encouraged to share their opinions and to lead curricular initiatives. As a result of this open and supportive leadership style, communication and confidence are strong and there are very few staff changes. Senior staff ably assist the headteacher, and together form a senior management team that monitors the school's performance and identify priorities. The school's leadership team has made an accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance and relevant issues for development have been correctly identified.

Governance is good. Like the staff team, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher keeps them very well informed, but they also visit the school and meet with pupils, staff and parents and, because of this, they are able to make informed decisions and make a good contribution to the development of the school. The school's finance is efficiently managed to provide good pupil teacher ratios and ongoing premises refurbishment. Value for money is therefore good.

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	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	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?	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	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

21 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Usworth Grange Primary School, Sunderland, NE37 3BG

Thank you for the welcome you gave the inspection team when we inspected your school. We were most impressed with your good manners and behaviour. We enjoyed talking to you and loved the enthusiasm you showed in your lessons.

We agree with you that your school is a good one. You enjoy your lessons because teaching and learning are good. Your teachers take good care of you, supporting and guiding you well. The subjects and topics you study are most interesting and I know you enjoy the good range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Your parents appreciate that you are not only learning knowledge and skills; you are learning how to be safe, healthy and responsible. These things are most important for adult life.

The school is going to help you further by improving your writing skills and by making sure that you know how you can improve your work in mathematics. You can help by reading as much as you can and practising your number problems and tables. Reading is a wonderful hobby and you will be most surprised how much quicker you can calculate when you learn basic skills.

We hope you continue to love school and achieve well. We know you will be preparing for Christmas and the end of term now. Do enjoy your activities. Have a wonderful time.

We send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Elton

Lead inspector