

The Glebe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111550
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	310626
Inspection dates	15–16 July 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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs Glenda Repton
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Pulford Road Norton Stockton-on-Tees TS20 1QY
Telephone number	01642 360876
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school caters for pupils from the immediate area on the outskirts of Stockton-on-Tees and further afield. Pupils come from both advantaged and less affluent areas; the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, with some good features. It is a caring school where pupils feel valued and mature well in their personal development. Good leadership by the headteacher ensures that the school has the right priorities and is suitably developing, although the pace of change is steady, rather than brisk. Standards and achievement are similar to those at the time of the last inspection, and some improvements in teaching and the curriculum have not yet paid dividends. The school's self-evaluation is too positive. It believes that most of its provision is good but has not equated this with pupils' satisfactory progress.

By Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. When the pupils' starting points to school are considered, these standards represent satisfactory achievement. The school is aware that writing, problem solving in mathematics and investigative skills in science all need strengthening in order for standards to rise. By Year 2, standards have tended to be above average in recent years but are likely to be a little lower this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school because of swift identification of their needs and the effective range of support. More able pupils achieve satisfactorily but not better, because the challenge of their work is not open-ended enough to fully extend their existing skills and knowledge.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. In classrooms, positive atmospheres mean that pupils enjoy learning. Lessons are clear in their aims but are often quite rigid, in that they follow a standardised curriculum without enough allowance for pupils' individual abilities or interests. As a result, pupils are not routinely challenged enough in their work and so do not make the progress they might. Topics are directed by teachers too much and pupils are not able to take responsibility for their own learning. Some exciting experiences, such as science weeks, enliven the curriculum but similar activities are not often evident in lessons.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have a sensible approach to a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise. Attendance, which is currently satisfactory, is improving and demonstrates that most pupils enjoy school. In lessons, however, their pace of work is not rapid unless supervised. A few parents are understandably concerned about occasional incidents of bad behaviour, but the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good. Pupils are proactive in the school, carrying out responsibilities earnestly, and learn about the wider world through overseas links. Good links with secondary school smooth their transition to the next phase of education.

The school is satisfactorily led and managed. The staff have good ideas for the school's development and share a common will to improve, but their action plans are not sharply focused. Governors, although they are supportive and hard-working, do not hold the school to account with enough rigour to make sure that it does as well as it could. Nevertheless, with the headteacher's good leadership and clear sense of direction, the school has sufficient capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress and, by the end of Reception, exceed the goals expected of five-year-olds. They

make best progress in their personal and social development, as the school believes that this provides them with a firm foundation from which to develop other skills. Teaching is good. The varied and stimulating activities are carefully planned to consolidate and build on what children have learned. Such opportunities also help children to demonstrate good independence and imagination. Parents appreciate the fruitful links with the school; they know that staff are approachable and responsive to concerns. Teachers regularly assess children's progress and use the information effectively to set targets and develop individual diaries that provide a clear picture of each child's development. Leadership and management are good and ensure good provision for work and play. The outdoor facilities for Reception children are undergoing further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Create a more diverse and stimulating everyday curriculum that will strengthen pupils' basic skills and their independence in learning.
- Ensure greater rigour in school self-evaluation and a faster pace to the school's development.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their standards are average. They begin Year 1 with skills and abilities that have tended to be average but are now above those typical for their age. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and, after that, pupils make satisfactory progress. In recent years, standards have been above average by Year 2. This year, evidence suggests that standards will not be quite so good in reading and mathematics, and may well be closer to average. This year group began school at a lower starting point.

Standards at Year 6 have varied since the last inspection and are now broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The results of national tests show standards rose in 2006 and were above average; English standards rose further in 2007. However, they fell in mathematics and, especially in science where they were below average. The school identified weaknesses in writing, problem solving and investigative skills, and has gone some way to address them. This year, provisional results show standards may be slightly higher which represents satisfactory progress for these pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities tend to make good progress, because their needs are well identified and successful support is provided.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They have a strong moral code and develop a good rapport with other pupils and staff. Behaviour is essentially good. Pupils appreciate that any inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated by staff, and so feel safe and interact sensibly with one another. Pupils develop good self-esteem and respond well to the fascination of learning. This keenness is reflected in their improving attendance and in their concentration when lessons are exciting. They relish practical activities but say that these do not happen often enough.

Pupils are responsible within the school community; for instance, they care for the school garden and manage the recycling facilities. Their involvement in the wider world is developing through links overseas, notably in South Africa. Pupils are increasingly adopting a balanced diet and doing regular exercise. It is no surprise that the school has the Healthy Schools award. Older pupils are involved in projects which they have to plan and cost out, and so acquire some basic enterprise skills. Overall, pupils have a sound basis for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers successfully establish a positive atmosphere in lessons so that pupils feel comfortable to ask questions and seek help if they are unsure. Praise and encouragement are used well to boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence. In good lessons, teachers' planning ensures a variety of learning activities that match pupils' individual needs, making good use of time and resources. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and regularly referred to so that they are clear about what they are expected to learn. In these instances, pupils find their learning interesting and challenging, ask astute questions and make good progress. In too many lessons, however, teachers do not always make enough use of assessment information to fine-tune their lesson planning so that work is matched as precisely as possible to the needs of all pupils. In addition, pupils often spend too long listening to the teacher or have activities that are too tightly structured. As a result, pupils miss valuable opportunities to investigate, develop their own ideas and put their knowledge into practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The school rightly places considerable emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and science. There is extra time for reading and problem solving, and a good focus on science investigations. However, the school is not yet succeeding in accelerating learning and improving standards because the curriculum is quite rigid and not stimulating enough on a regular basis; it is not helped by an over-reliance on worksheets. Furthermore, teachers do not exploit other subjects enough to develop the pupils' skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), although there are plans to do so.

The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of extra activities, such as computer clubs and themed weeks. French and thinking skills have been introduced and motivate pupils. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well targeted in class and in small groups, and so these pupils make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Parents and pupils appreciate the good pastoral care by all staff. Understandably, pupils say they feel safe in school. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to provide extra support for those who are vulnerable or experience difficulty with their behaviour or learning. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Actions taken by the school to improve levels of attendance have met with some success.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Recently introduced systems for tracking pupils' progress are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers are now able to focus support more accurately, particularly on those pupils who are underperforming. All pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy, and are increasingly aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The good leadership of the headteacher ensures suitable priorities, especially to promote personal development. Improvements include better computer facilities, international links and themed weeks. She has developed the roles of senior staff so that they are more effective in their responsibilities. However, there is still some way to go because monitoring is not yet incisive enough and standards are not rising.

Through their questionnaires, parents show they are positive about the school, especially its ethos and the approachability of staff. A few have concerns about behaviour and the mixed-age classes. Inspectors understand their concerns but found little evidence of adverse impact on standards. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and keen to improve the school, but they do not hold it to account with enough rigour, especially with regard to academic standards and achievement.

The school's judges most of its provision to be good. This is not wholly accurate because the school does not link its provision enough to pupils' outcomes. Its action plans for development are based on regular analyses which pinpoint strengths and weaknesses but they are not sharply focused enough to ensure swift progress. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Most aspects, including standards and achievement, are much the same, and some issues in writing, science and assessment have not been fully resolved.

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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	2
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	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	3

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?	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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Glebe Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1QY

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school and to tell you what we found out. We certainly enjoyed our visit and are grateful to you and your parents for all the comments and information that we received.

We think your school gives you a satisfactory education. Some aspects are good - in particular, you. We particularly liked your responsible attitudes, your thoughtfulness to others and your behaviour. We know that not all behaviour is perfect, but the vast majority of you behave well and so make the school a happy place. You respond well in lessons although, as you told us, you prefer hands-on activities rather than listening for too long. We agree, and we know that the school is beginning to develop a more exciting curriculum to motivate you more, develop your all-round skills and offer more opportunity for you to do more for yourselves.

The standards of your work are about what is expected for children of your age. You have a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and, after that, your progress is satisfactory. Your teachers work hard for you but do not always give you work that is really challenging; your progress could be swifter. We would like the school to make sure that all lessons are carefully planned so that all of you, whatever your abilities, are not working too much within your comfort zone. We are confident that you would respond well to this.

All the staff take good care of you. We know you and your parents appreciate this, and you are able to relax and feel secure in school. Your headteacher has good ideas for the school and has already improved certain things like the computer room and themed weeks. There is still more to do, and we have asked the school to make sure that it has a very accurate picture of what its strengths and weaknesses are, so that it can create plans that will lead to rapid improvement. You might like to help by offering your thoughts on how to improve the school and by continuing to respond well to all staff.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector