

Green Gates Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111607
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	310642
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Mary Ovens
Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Fiske
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Kielder Close Redcar TS10 4HS
Telephone number	01642 485463
Fax number	01642 483557

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school set in an area of very high social and economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average; so too is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school hosts an Early Intervention Support Base for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed at the start of this school year.

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's effectiveness is satisfactory and improving under the clear direction of the headteacher. There are some good features; for example, in pupils' personal development and in the care and support given to pupils. After a period of staffing instability, which slowed development, the school is now moving forward well in improving the rate of learning for most pupils. Parents are supportive of the school and comment on recent changes, 'I have noticed a vast improvement in the school's dealing with issues and in the array of new after school clubs.'

Pupils attain below average standards by Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory from their standards attained at Year 3. In Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average, although pupils have made satisfactory progress from their low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in the mainstream classes but they do not make as much progress as other pupils when they are withdrawn from class. After trialling intensive, small group teaching in the last year the school is ready to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory, with developing strengths. Teaching for mainstream pupils is well planned to meet their needs and teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers are increasingly using 'on the spot' assessments to gauge how well pupils are learning in lessons. Pupils say learning is fun, and inspectors agree that teachers use a good range of methods and activities to keep pupils motivated and working hard. This year, pupils with learning difficulties have been withdrawn from class for their literacy and numeracy lessons. Their activities have not been accurately matched to their needs so they have not always made the same progress as other pupils. This reduces the overall impact of some good and very good teaching across the school as a whole. The curriculum is well extended with visits and visitors, and teachers are beginning to plan links between subjects so that pupils reinforce their learning in different ways.

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Their good behaviour does them credit, as does the way they care for each other and work together to make the school a better place. They are generous fund raisers and enjoy contributing to the wider community through their musical performances and end of term shows. They know how to stay healthy and fit and thoroughly enjoy 'wake up-shake up' exercises each morning, as well as taking part in the many after school sports. By the time they leave they are soundly prepared for the next stage of learning. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe and secure in school. Teachers know their pupils well and provide plenty of opportunities for them to share concerns either in time set aside for discussion or through the 'sharing box' where pupils can raise any concerns they have. Pupils in the Early Intervention Support Base are well cared for and supported by skilled staff who know their needs well. A number of these pupils have transferred to the mainstream school so they can benefit fully from the school's good quality care. Academic guidance for learning is satisfactory and is improving as staff become familiar with new assessment systems.

Leadership and management including governance are satisfactory. The headteacher provides a good lead in establishing a 'can do' culture in the school. Staff have a clear understanding of their role in raising standards and embrace change to support the vision for higher standards, though they do not have enough time away from the classroom to monitor standards and

provision in their subjects. Given the impact of recent improvements, the school is in a strong position to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Teaching, learning and the curriculum in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children enter school with attainments mostly well below those typical for their age, particularly in social and emotional development and in all aspects of communication, language and literacy. Children make satisfactory progress, although very few reach the nationally expected goals for their learning by the end of Reception. Good induction procedures help most children to settle well. There is an appropriate balance of adult led and child initiated activities and adults are deployed well to cope with the large numbers. Planning does not provide enough activities at the correct level to engage and sustain the interest of children of all abilities, so that sometimes learning slows. The indoor environment gives children a wide range of experiences, but there are too few opportunities for children to work independently to help them develop the confidence to do things for themselves. The recently appointed co-ordinator has identified areas for improvement, including aspects of personal, social and emotional development, but work is in the early stages and the impact is limited. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they consistently make the same progress as other pupils.
- Improve the range and quality of activities and the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and increase the proportion of children reaching the expected goals by the end of Reception.
- Extend the role of subject leaders and provide time away from the classroom for them to monitor and evaluate standards and provision in their subjects.

A small proportion of schools, whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but have areas of under-performance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average and pupils' achievement, including that of pupils in the Early Intervention and Support Base is satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are still well below average at the end of Year 2.

Results in national tests in 2007 showed that a large proportion of pupils in Year 6 had not made enough progress from their national test results in Year 2. The school traces this poor performance to the staffing turbulence of the last three years, which had a significant adverse effect on this particular class. While standards in the current Year 6 are below average, most pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in English and mathematics since the end of Year 2. They are on course to reach challenging targets in national tests. This is because this year a far higher proportion of pupils has made or exceeded the expected progress due to the introduction of more regular tracking of their learning. This ensures that most

under-achievement is picked up more quickly. The exception is in the monitoring of pupils who are withdrawn from class. Their learning is not as regularly monitored by teachers, so any slow progress is not rectified as quickly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is good. Pupils enjoy a strong sense of safety and security in school, because they are taught the importance of staying safe and healthy. They enjoy learning and love coming to school, as their good attendance shows. Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of their own and other's feelings. They say they know what to do if bullying occurs, while older pupils are confident that all problems are resolved and well managed by teachers. School councillors play an important part in finding out what matters to all pupils and in taking action to make improvements. They, and the Eco committee, have made a big difference to the school environment, playtimes and how well pupils are cared for in the playground. Pupils enjoy making a contribution to their own and the wider community, by taking on 'jobs', organising and taking part in concerts and raising generous sums for a range of charities. By Year 6 they are mature young people who have a good understanding of how to be a good citizen and are adequately prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with examples of good and better teaching seen. The organisation of pupils into ability groups for literacy and numeracy has had a positive impact on the achievements of the majority. However, pupils who are withdrawn from class for these lessons do not make the same progress as others, and this weakens the impact of some good and very good teaching across the school. Good lessons engage pupils and encourage them to think about their learning. In response they are enthusiastic, motivated and work at a good pace. Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively and this creates a positive atmosphere conducive to learning. Teachers have willingly adopted new assessment and marking practices this year to help pupils understand how well they are doing, although the arrangements are not yet applied consistently across the school. Some examples of effective marking were seen which were moving learning forward at a good rate, but the school has not yet gathered a clear enough picture of strengths in this area to share it with teachers for the benefit of all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are some good features. Arrangements for literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology are satisfactory, although work set for mainstream pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities does not match their needs closely enough. Pupils' personal, social and health education is good. It gives pupils a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. Creative links are developing in the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote an excellent Rap warning about the dangers of drug misuse. Enrichment activities are good. A wide range of visits and visitors throughout the year extend pupils' interests and experience. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity

to participate in a residential visit which develops their independence. There are regular opportunities for pupils to take part in musical and dramatic performances within school and the local community giving them a good understanding of how to improve community life. There is a good range of after school clubs which allows pupils to pursue their special interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care and support for pupils' personal development are good; academic guidance is satisfactory and improving well. All safeguarding and health and safety requirements are in place. Parents of pupils who attend the Early Intervention Support Base value the support provided and when their children are ready to leave, often move them into the mainstream school to retain the good care their children receive. One parent's comment is typical of many, 'I cannot believe the difference that this school has made, and I feel very happy that my son was lucky enough to be accepted in the school. It has been a total blessing.' Parents consider that their children are well cared for and they too value the support provided by staff. Assessment has improved considerably and although it still has a way to go for maximum impact, there has been an improvement to the rate of pupils' progress as a result of more regular tracking of their learning. There is good practice in some classes which senior managers are keen to extend across the school for the benefit of all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The strong leadership of the headteacher, well supported by senior staff and governors has successfully steered the school through a difficult period since the last inspection. Progress since then has been satisfactory. Unavoidable staff absence and staff turn over contributed to a decline in pupils' progress in that time. Staffing is now stable and new systems have been introduced to track pupils' learning. Staff have a better understanding of their role in raising standards across the school. Pupils' progress is improving as a result of these initiatives. The development of the subject leader's role has slowed because of the recent turbulence and they currently do not have enough opportunity away from the classroom to monitor the work of the school and contribute fully to its improvement. While school self-evaluation is satisfactory, senior managers do not yet have a detailed enough picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses to identify the most important priorities. Governors have given good support to the school since the last inspection and are fully committed to its continued improvement. The Early Intervention Support Base provision, for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, is well managed and leads to the successful integration of these pupils in their own schools.

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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	2
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

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Green Gates Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS10 4HS

Thank you all for the lovely warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. It was really good to see you at work and play, and to see how well you contribute to making your school such a happy, friendly place. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there have been some good improvements recently that are helping it to become even better.

Your school is good at developing your personal skills, such as tolerance and care for others and confidence in yourself. You are good at improving your school by listening to each other and then getting organised to make things happen. The Eco committee and school council certainly don't let the grass grow under their feet! You behave well and show respect for each other's rights to learn and make your classrooms calm, safe places for learning. You told us you feel well cared for and have somewhere to turn for help. You are well cared for in school by all adults and your parents agree. By Year 6 you have really good personal skills and qualities and these will serve you well for the rest of your life.

Some of the things you might notice that will help your school become even better are: the way that teachers will give you more help with how to improve your work; those of you who sometimes work outside of the class room will join the rest of the class more often; children in the Foundation Stage will have different activities to keep them learning at a fast pace and your teachers will be taking a closer look at what is going on in all areas of your school.

You can help your school to get even better by working as hard as you do now, especially in English and mathematics, and by continuing to follow the good example of your teachers in caring for each other.

A huge thank you to Year 6 for their fantastic singing. It was the perfect end to our lovely visit. Thank you all very much. You should be on at the Sage in Gateshead with singing like yours. And finally, a thank you to your well known pupil poet, your poetry just 'put the icing on the cake' for us.

Our very best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector