

Griffin Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119116
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	313190
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen Yates

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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Barnes
Headteacher	Miss Catherine Clayton-Grady
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
School address	Cavendish Place Blackburn Lancashire BB2 2PN
Telephone number	01254 57724
Fax number	01254 676319

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized urban school. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Many improvements are being made to the building to enhance the indoor and the outdoor facilities, including those for pupils with disabilities. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the numbers of these who have English as an additional language are both lower than those found nationally. The headteacher has been in post for two terms. The school has received the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Griffin Park Primary is a good school and provides its pupils with a good standard of education. Inspection findings match the school's own view of itself in most respects. There are good links with other schools, outside agencies, the community and parents to promote the well-being of learners. Parents' views are positive and are accurately summed up by one who wrote, 'This is a happy and friendly school where staff are approachable.'

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They achieve well from starting points that are below those typical for children of this age. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are working close to the levels typically found. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2. They reach standards that are broadly average in reading and writing, although they are below average in mathematics. The more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in writing and mathematics and could make more progress. Good progress is made by Year 6 where pupils reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. In the most recent national tests in English pupils in Year 6 did particularly well. Science has lagged behind other subjects because the school did not have a subject leader for science and standards are below average. They are improving as new leadership is giving staff clearer guidance.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are well behaved. They are happy in school and enjoy their learning. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy and active lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe. They make a particularly good contribution to the community. Attendance is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are managed well and are often interesting and capture pupils' enthusiasm. Expectations are not always high enough especially of the more able pupils. The happy atmosphere throughout the school promotes pupils' confidence and boosts their self-esteem helping them to achieve well. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by a range of enrichment activities. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is satisfactory but is good for their pastoral development. Targets are shared with pupils, which helps them to know what it is they need to do to improve but they are not changed frequently enough for those pupils who achieve them quickly.

Leadership and management are good. Leaders and managers have been successful in driving up standards in literacy to the best they have ever been. Governance is satisfactory. Subject leaders are at an early stage of gaining the skills to track how well pupils are doing across the school and to evaluate that actions impact well on standards. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and there is a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are lower than those usually seen for this age. For some, their skills in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development are considerably below what is usually found. Good induction arrangements ensure that each child's individual ability is quickly assessed, enabling the school to meet their different needs effectively. As a result, the children settle very quickly and confidently and are at ease in their surroundings. They achieve well in all aspects of their work. Teaching is good. Staff plan and work together very well. They have a clear understanding of how young children learn and provide a good balance of adult-led and child initiated activities. Children become confident

and independent learners. Learning gathers pace in the Reception class where an exciting range of structured learning opportunities fire the imagination and children make good progress, especially in their language and social development. The school has plans in place to refurbish the Nursery and improve the restricted outdoor facilities. Leadership and management are good. Staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use the information well to plan further challenges. By the time they enter Year 1, the current children are close to reaching the levels expected in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 1 and in science at Key Stage 2.
- Improve the skills of subject leaders in tracking the progress pupils make to ensure they have a sharper focus on evaluating the impact of actions on standards.
- Ensure the targets set for pupils are changed as soon as they have been achieved and include pupils more in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children start school with skills in language and mathematics which are below those typical for their age and reach average standards by the time they leave school. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach average standards in reading and writing but are below average in mathematics. In writing and mathematics the more able pupils do not make enough progress to reach the higher standards. Teachers' assessments in 2007 at the end of Year 2 confirm this judgement.

Pupils make good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. There has been an improving trend in their standards in English and mathematics. The results of national tests in 2007 showed that pupils exceeded the challenging targets set for them in English and reached above average standards. They also exceeded the targets set for them in mathematics. Current work shows average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science are below average and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards is too low. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well mannered, engaging and friendly. They enjoy coming to school and have a positive attitude towards learning. Although there are some who need behavioural support, behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are mindful of the need to take care and to be responsible for their own safety. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Visitors from different cultures enhance the curriculum, but pupils' understanding of living in a diverse multicultural society is less well developed.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and of the importance of exercise. They take part enthusiastically in many sports and physical activities. Pupils make a very strong contribution to school life, playing an active role in decision making. The highly effective school council raises funds for charities, provides guidance to the senior leadership team and represents pupils very well. There is a very good commitment to the wider community

where pupils are involved in the design of the new playground. They gain skills which prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships are warm and pupils respond confidently to teachers' questioning. Resources are used well and the level of challenge for pupils is generally high so that there is a brisk pace to learning. On occasions there is not enough challenge and pace in lessons, particularly in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. When this happens more able pupils do not reach the standards they are capable of. Pupils enjoy the opportunities of working together and a high emphasis on practical activities, such as the recent science week, make learning memorable. The pace of learning slows when lessons lack sparkle and teachers do not plan sufficiently for pupils to take an active part. On these occasions, some pupils do not always behave as well as they might. Teachers mark work regularly but there is little guidance to show pupils how to do even better. This is particularly apparent in science at Key Stage 2 where guidance is insufficient to help pupils reach higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes learning well although it does not always meet the needs of the more able pupils. Planning provides a clear overview of what is to be taught and good attention is paid to teaching basic skills across the range of subjects. Teachers are developing a more creative approach, to establish meaningful links between subjects. There are many exciting activities for the children to participate in, including local initiatives, for example, a 'French Day' in partnership with the local high school. Pupils respond positively to initiatives such as themed weeks. The pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about making and launching rockets. Partnership with outside agencies is good and provides valuable support for curriculum development, including the local football club and curriculum specialists, where aspects of physical education are taught by specialist staff. The good quality of this teaching enhances pupils' learning. Pupils value and enjoy the excellent range of enrichment activities, especially the clubs and weekly enrichment time when mixed age groups work with different teachers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Support for pupils' pastoral development is good. Safeguarding procedures are all in place. As a result, this is a happy school. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Assessment information is used well to identify when pupils need extra support. For example, the impact of booster classes and extra support for pupils who find learning difficult, those from minority ethnic groups, including those who have English as an additional language, and for some higher attainers is helping them to achieve well. However, support for the gifted and talented pupils is less well developed. Assessment information is enabling teachers to set pupils' individual targets. However, these are not changed regularly enough for those who are quick to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and the members of the senior leadership team are industrious in their roles. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and everyone is alert to the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders share their subject knowledge well across the school. This has led to good improvement in English by the end of Year 6 and the same energy is now being channelled to science. The role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating is developing. They make regular checks on pupils' work. They are at an early stage of tracking pupils' progress to gain an informed view of how proposed actions can raise standards. Governance is satisfactory. While it has been difficult to recruit and maintain a full governing body, governors have ensured that the budget is spent wisely and that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

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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	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	1
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?	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	3
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	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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Griffin Park Primary School, Blackburn with Darwen, BB2 2PN

Mrs Havard and I really enjoyed meeting you during our visit. Thank you for the time you spent with us, showing us around your school and telling us of your views. Having lunch with you gave us a chance to meet even more of you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

Your parents are absolutely right when they say that Griffin Park is a friendly and happy school. You are well behaved and enjoy your lessons a great deal. You also enjoy a wide range of extra activities and get on well together. You look after one another well and know how to eat healthily and keep yourselves safe and fit. You are very well involved in community issues. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for you and we know how much you enjoy the science weeks and joining up with the local high school for a 'French Day'. Many of you take part in a wide range of extra activities. All these things make Griffin Park Primary a good school.

We have asked the school to help you to reach higher standards in mathematics and writing by Year 2, and in science by Year 6. Although most of you are already doing well in your work, your school is going to help you and your parents to be more involved in knowing how you can do even better. As soon as you have reached your targets you will be given new ones. We have asked that staff look closely at how well you are doing so that they can share this information across the school and with you and your parents.

Thank you once again for making us so welcome. We wish you well for the future.

Mrs Yates and Mrs Havard

(Inspectors)