

# Grange Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123956
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	314766
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Atcheson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	60
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Diane Marson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Harrowby Road Meir Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 319143
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 319143

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is a large nursery school in the city of Stoke-on-Trent. It works closely with several partnerships that form the Grange 'Learning Village'. Many of the children who attend the nursery come from families that face considerably challenging social and economic circumstances. An above average number of children are eligible for free school meals. Children's attainment when they start in the nursery covers an extremely wide range but the communication and mathematical skills of a significant number are below average. A very small number of children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few of the children are learning English as an additional language. An above average number of children have learning difficulties. Most of these relate to speech and language development. In this particular inspection, inspectors were asked to make a specific note of how the school evaluates and improves the achievement of learners who are eligible for free school meals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding nursery. Parents think highly of it and rightly express their appreciation for the exceptional leadership and first-rate teaching. One parent said, 'I think the school is excellent and, more importantly, my daughter has the same view.'

The headteacher is the driving force behind this success. She has a clear vision for the future of the school. Both she and her team of senior staff are totally committed to promoting high standards and ensuring consistently high quality learning for all children. They are eager to help parents understand how their children learn and are keen to involve them in this process.

The children are excited to come in to Nursery and love to learn new things. This is because relationships between staff and children are so good and because a well-planned, stimulating curriculum supports their learning well. Teachers plan lessons that interest children and motivate them to learn. They know their children very well and so work is tailor-made to the interests and abilities of all children. Teachers also track children's progress very closely, constantly adjusting the learning to provide just the right amount of challenge for each child. Consequently, all children make excellent progress so that most are working close to the expectations for their age. Their achievement, often from a very low beginning, is outstanding. At the end of Nursery, some are well on their way to reaching the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year in primary school. Others, particularly those who have learning difficulties, still have a little way to go to catch up in their communication, language and literacy skills. The progress of children eligible for free school meals is also excellent, and closely matches the progress of all other children.

Care, guidance and support are excellent and consequently, children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. The children thrive in the calm and purposeful environment where all are valued and encouraged to succeed. They are confident learners who listen attentively, share ideas and take pride in what they do. The nursery's strong emphasis on healthy eating and plenty of physical exercise, together with a clear code of safety, makes the children very aware of how to keep healthy and stay safe. Their behaviour is exemplary. Systems are securely in place to ensure that the children are safe and happy in school, and to support those who are vulnerable or have particular needs.

This is a school, which knows itself well; however, it recognises that it has been cautious in its judgement of some aspects of provision, which inspectors judge to be outstanding. A rigorous programme of self-review and evaluation, together with the thorough way in which it identifies and tackles weaknesses, proves that this is a school which has an outstanding capacity to improve. Governors are supportive; many take an active part in the life and work of the school but those who are new and inexperienced have yet to develop fully the role they play in the strategic direction of the school.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

As this is a Nursery school, this report covers the Foundation Stage in full.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the strategic role played by governors so that they are able to help maintain the school's very strong provision and outcomes.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

The nursery uses its rigorous analysis of children's attainment on entry well to define those areas of learning that have the greatest need for development when the children start school. This means that learning is targeted accurately. Well-planned activities, together with expert guidance, ensure that the achievement of all children is outstanding. Highly effective teaching and additional support groups ensure that children at the early stages of learning English also make excellent progress, as do those with learning difficulties. The progress of children who are eligible for free school meals is not analysed as a specific group, but the school's information shows that they are doing just as well as their classmates. A happy, secure environment means that children quickly gain in confidence and independence in their learning. They make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the wide range of planned activities, exceptionally caring guidance of staff and positive support for learning from their parents.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Good attendance reflects the fact that children enjoy school enormously. One parent said, 'My son thoroughly enjoys going to Grange Nursery School and gets excited every morning, knowing it is time for school.' Assemblies, special events, and a rich curriculum support the children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a most effective way. Children delighted in finding metal objects hidden in the sand and were entranced by each other's Easter bonnets and the parade. The children are beginning to understand about rights and responsibilities by learning to take care of their own needs. They take great pride in setting the table for lunch, carefully placing the cutlery in the right place.

Children are enthusiastic about adopting a healthy lifestyle and know that they have to eat vegetables and fruit to grow big and strong. They are aware of safe practices such as when sweeping the floor after using sand and sitting down to use scissors carefully. They know how to share and have a respect for the others. They are very proud of being daily helpers and contribute to a calm classroom by cooperating with each other. Their growing independence together with the outstanding progress they make in their skills, knowledge and understanding stands them in good stead for the next stage in their school life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

All staff know the children very well. They promote really good behaviour and a happy atmosphere through the warm and caring relationships. They know when to intervene to move the children's learning on and are highly skilled at asking the right questions that will help children to reach their next steps in learning. All the adults in the classroom interact exceptionally well with children, talking to them, questioning them, exploring their ideas and enhancing their vocabulary. Thorough planning to meet children's individual needs enables them to make very good progress. Exciting opportunities for learning are presented in interesting activities indoors and out. These encourage play, exploration and investigation. Frequent assessment of children is used well to set challenging targets that are relevant to the children's needs.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

A well-planned, inclusive curriculum meets the needs of individual children and groups of children very well. It provides exceptionally interesting and lively learning activities, often based on children's input. Planning ensures that there is a very good balance between play that is initiated by the children and tasks which are directed by adults in well-taught 'focus groups'. An impressive range of visits, visitors and special events enrich the children's experience in and out of school. For example, children and parents really enjoyed the Cultural Caf , which gave them an appreciation of food from other cultures. A strength of the curriculum is the themed approach to outdoor learning, which helps children to make links between different aspects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across the curriculum particularly to focus on writing and calculation. These areas were once recognised as weaknesses but, because the school introduced successful strategies to reinforce children's learning, they are now becoming strengths.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Inspectors agree with parents that the school takes exceptionally good care of the well-being of their children. Children's health and hygiene is very well promoted and they know that they must wash their hands before eating. All staff have a genuine understanding and concern for children's needs. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are rigorous and all staff understand and comply with them. As a result, all children feel happy and secure and can learn in an environment free from disturbance. Support for the most vulnerable children is particularly good and contributes to their successful inclusion on the life of the school. The school's work with families who face challenging social and economic circumstances is highly valued by parents. One parent said 'Any problems you have at home and need to talk, they are there and sit down and listen.'

Children know what they have to do to gain their next steps in learning. They like to practise their targets and often do so at home with the help of their parents. This helps, supports and drives the outstanding progress that children make over time.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The key to the success of this outstanding school is the fact that all leaders, managers and staff share the headteacher's vision and aspirations for the children. They are united in their commitment to providing excellence at all levels within a highly inclusive, caring atmosphere. Information about the children's starting points and progress is analysed and used very skilfully to promote a high level of standards and achievement for all children through the school development plan. This is a working document shared and used by all and consists of a series of well-defined priorities for action.

Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning leads to professional development of staff, for example the development of children's writing and their calculation skills in mathematics. Both of these areas are directly linked to priorities identified in the school development plan. Staff particularly value this high quality of training which has helped to raise

the quality of their expertise and in turn, raise standards and achievement. Close collaboration between classes makes for consistency and continuity in learning.

Governors share the school's passion for constant improvement in the quest for excellence, but the school recognises that there is work to be done to ensure that new members of the governing body are fully equipped to take a strategic role in the life and work of the school.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

12 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Grange Nursery, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7AN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit you. We think that you go to an excellent nursery and we know that you think that too because you and your parents and carers told us and we have seen you enjoying yourselves inside and outside. We think that you behave very well and are pleased that you want to come to nursery as much as you can. We have seen how kind and helpful you are to each other and how well you share your toys and books. Thank you for helping around the nursery. You sweep the sand up very well and do what adults ask you to do. You are very clever at laying the tables for lunch. Thank you for letting me join you for lunch. I was so pleased to see that you really enjoy it, especially your healthy 'crunchies'.

You learn quickly because the adults give you many exciting things to do and teach you well. They really care for you and help you if you are worried or upset. They check how well you are learning and are very good at giving you extra help when you need it. They also tell your mums and dads how they can help you at home. This means that you all do very well indeed. Some of your governors are new and we have asked them to find out how they can help the school even more. I know that you and your mums and dads are very proud of the nursery and I think you are right to be so.

I hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson Lead inspector



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Barbara Atcheson  
Lead inspector