

Grange Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124010 |
| Local Authority | Stoke-On-Trent |
| Inspection number | 322349 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 July 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Anthony O'Malley HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 311 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fred Batho |
| Headteacher | Rachel Beckett |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 June 2007 |
| School address | Normacot Grange Road Meir Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7AW |
| Telephone number | 01782 319097 |
| Fax number | 01782 331573 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of above average social deprivation. Almost pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well above average. Most children enter the Foundation Stage (Reception) with skills that are below those expected for their age. The headteacher took up her post in January 2008.

When the school was inspected in June 2007, it was judged to require special measures because it failed to give the pupils an acceptable standard of education. Since December 2007, the school has been monitored on a regular basis by HMI.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Grange Primary School is a good school, which has rapidly improved over the last year. This improvement is the result of outstanding leadership by the headteacher. She has shown great determination to raise standards. She has identified and confronted weaknesses in teaching and this has been crucial in improving provision and outcomes. She provides a clear direction for the school and is passionate that everyone is equally committed to her vision of a community 'where education and children are valued.' The pupils are happy to talk about the school's transformation and the many improvements they have benefited from.

Pupils begin school in the Reception Year with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They make sound progress, particularly in their social skills, but relatively few achieve the expected learning outcomes. In particular, their literacy and numeracy skills do not develop as well as other skills. Speaking and writing remain relative weaknesses throughout the school.

Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 1 to 6, and pupils achieve well. Standards remain below average by the end of Year 2 because of the legacy of inadequate provision in the past. However, this year's national test scores for pupils in Year 6 are the highest the school has ever achieved. Standards are in line with the national averages and over a third of pupils are working at the higher level (Level 5) in English and mathematics. In science, this proportion is almost two thirds. Additional support for pupils who have learning difficulties is planned carefully and delivered well by teachers and teaching assistants. This ensures that pupils at risk of falling behind are able to participate fully in lessons and are making good progress. This good achievement prepares all of the pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. Their good behaviour and concern for others are evidence of their impressive spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is improving, although below average. Through their school council and other responsibilities, pupils make a good contribution to the community. Recent changes to the curriculum have ensured that their cultural awareness is also well developed and the pupils now have good understanding of the diverse cultures in Britain.

The quality of teaching and learning was inadequate at the time of the previous inspection; it is now good. Lessons are well structured and planned to meet the wide range of needs in the classes. Pupils are confident and eager learners, ready to volunteer answers. The school monitors closely the progress of individual pupils, celebrating success and giving support where it identifies underachievement. Marking is particularly good, enabling pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils are set challenging targets and these contribute well to their good achievement.

The curriculum is good. Senior leaders have consulted with the pupils to understand better how learning can be more engaging and motivating. Themes and topics, often suggested by pupils, make the learning relevant to their interests and needs. This year, for the first time, the older pupils benefited from a residential visit. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good and the school provides a safe, happy and friendly place to learn. The school works exceptionally hard to involve parents as partners in their children's education. It also has

excellent links with the local authority, other schools and support agencies. These have greatly assisted the school's rapid improvement.

The school's leadership and management are good. Governors have been rigorous in ensuring that appointments to senior positions in the school are of the highest quality. The tremendous impact of the recently appointed headteacher demonstrates their success. Crucially, she is already developing the leadership qualities in other staff. Governors are regularly in school and receive good quality information about the school's performance. This ensures that they have a thorough understanding of the school's effectiveness and provide effective support and challenge. The progress made since the previous inspection, and the developing quality of leadership at all levels, are evidence of the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Parents are right to appreciate the quality of care provided for the youngest children. The children settle quickly, and most soon learn to get along with each other. A few find it hard to concentrate and this slows down their progress. The children make sound progress but, by the end of Reception, the proportion achieving the learning goals expected is below that found nationally. Literacy and numeracy skills are the weakest areas. Teaching is satisfactory and activities are interesting with a good balance between those that are adult led and those the children choose. This makes learning fun. However, these activities do not always build upon previous learning because assessments of the children's progress are not consistently accurate. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities for children to share ideas and explore new vocabulary. Teaching assistants support groups well, but their expertise is not used to maximum effect during whole class sessions. The accommodation is stimulating and well resourced.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of assessments in the Foundation Stage to ensure planned activities build upon earlier learning and experiences.
- Raise standards in English by improving pupils' speaking and writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress, but relatively few reach the goals expected for their age. They do best in personal, social and emotional development, but progress is slower in numeracy and literacy. There is now good achievement in Years 1 to 6. In Year 2, where standards remain below average, an increasing proportion of pupils are now working at the expected levels. Throughout the school, pupils are reaching higher standards in mathematics and science than they are in English, where writing skills are weakest. In this year's national tests for pupils in Year 6, the pupils achieved standards in line with the national averages. Present standards in Year 5 show even an even higher proportion of pupils working at, or above, the levels expected for their age. The school provides well for pupils who require additional support. Strong support from the local authority has helped teachers to identify needs more precisely and plan interventions to accelerate their progress. These interventions are ensuring that pupils at risk of falling behind are making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through many interesting topics, pupils explore other cultures and beliefs, and questions of right and wrong, and so grow as thoughtful and considerate young people. They are polite, friendly and help others willingly. They work hard in lessons and always try their best. Most behave well, listen attentively and are keen to learn. While most attend regularly, the poor attendance of a few hampers their progress. Pupils contribute well to the community and enjoy many responsibilities. Through an effective 'buddy' system, they befriend those who have no one to play with. School councillors decide on fundraising events, recycling projects and new playground equipment. Through events such as charity activities and Christmas dinners, where members of the pupils' families are invited, pupils develop a good understanding of sharing with others. By working alongside others, including pupils from other cultures and traditions, they learn to respect others. Many visitors and visits help them gain a good understanding of the wider world. Pupils are very aware of safety issues and the dangers of drugs. They know who to go to if they feel worried or upset. They know that staying healthy is important. Many attend sports clubs, and select healthy lunches. The progress pupils make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them well for secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning were inadequate at the time of the previous inspection. A combination of strong leadership by the headteacher, very effective support from local authority consultants and excellent links with outstanding local schools has transformed teaching. The good balance between high quality whole class teaching and independent activities moves learning on at a brisk pace. Pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and get effective support during lessons to overcome misconceptions or extend learning. Effective use is made of assessments to plan lessons that successfully match activities to meet the wide range of needs in each class. Marking, a weakness just over a year ago, is now a strength because it enables pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Standards in writing are below those in other areas because of missed opportunities to promote speaking and writing in some lessons. Teachers now take full responsibility for the progress of all pupils in their classes, including those with learning difficulties. Together with teaching assistants, they plan additional support and track progress to ensure that all pupils are doing as well as they can.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning throughout the school day because their own ideas are often the starting point for themes and topics. Pupils say that as a result their lessons are more exciting. Curriculum guidance now places a greater emphasis on applying skills learned in mathematics and science to solve problems and conduct investigations. These are contributing to the higher standards in these subjects. However, there are missed opportunities to develop speaking, writing, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills throughout the curriculum. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is very good. The outstanding links with local schools, health services, police and other agencies support pupils' good personal

development. A wide range of visits, visitors and numerous out of school hours activities add excitement to pupils' learning and give pupils many opportunities to learn about their own locality and the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care arrangements are good and the school takes swift action when problems arise. Pupils appreciate how carefully adults listen to any concerns and know that there is plenty of support if they are worried or upset. Child protection, health and safety, and safeguarding procedures are all secure. The school now gets help from external agencies much more promptly for pupils who have specific social, emotional or educational needs. Academic guidance has improved greatly since the previous inspection. All staff monitor pupils' progress carefully and effective interventions are put in place to tackle underachievement. Pupils enjoy the challenge of their targets for improvement and these contribute to their good achievement. From Years 1 to 6, pupils talk confidently about how well they are doing and what they need to do to get the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Following the previous inspection, the local authority promptly strengthened the school's leadership and management. The appointments of an associate headteacher and additional governors ensured that no time was lost in tackling the school's weaknesses. However, it is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher over the last two terms that has been the key factor leading to the school's improvement. She has acted decisively to improve inadequate teaching and has successfully created a shared sense of moral purpose amongst staff. Only the best is now good enough for the pupils at Grange Primary. The English, mathematics and science subject leaders now have opportunities to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility and leadership capacity is improving throughout the school. The school's rigorous arrangements for self-evaluation give it a clear view of how well it is doing and where practice requires improvement. Governors receive high quality information about the school's performance and have sufficient expertise to enable them to take a full part in evaluating the school's effectiveness and planning for further improvement. The successes since the previous inspection show that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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| 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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange Primary School, Meir ST3 7AW

You may remember that two inspectors visited your school recently to see how you are coming along with your learning. Thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in your lessons. We were very pleased to see how much you like school. This is what we found out.

Grange Primary School is a good school. You are very polite, behave very well and work hard in lessons. You are learning well because your teachers and teaching assistants are good at explaining things and they give you just the right amount of help if you find work difficult. You know your targets for English and mathematics and you know what you need to do to improve. Your teachers mark your work very carefully and I was very pleased to see that you respond so thoughtfully to comments about your work. I was particularly impressed with how you are helping to improve your school. For example, you have successfully applied for funding to extend outdoor learning, designed a new school uniform, and improved playtimes. I was also pleased to learn of your links with the local places of worship and how your fundraising helps people less fortunate than yourselves. The amounts you raise are a tribute to the generosity of you and your families.

The staff care for you very well and so you enjoy school and feel safe. You all work together as a friendly community. Your headteacher is an excellent school leader. She and all the other adults work very hard to help you do as well as you can.

I have asked your school leaders and teachers to do two things to make your school even better.

- Make sure that the activities set for the Reception children always help them to learn new things and improve their skills.
- Give you plenty of opportunities to improve your speaking and writing skills

You can play your part in helping Grange Primary become an even more successful by continuing to work hard and attending school as regularly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B

10 July 2008

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Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector