

Grasvenor Avenue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101284
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	335689
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anna Batchelor
Headteacher	Jack Newton
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and spoke with pupils, staff, governors and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to school self-evaluation, the school development plan, assessment and tracking data about pupils' progress, the safeguarding of pupils, various school policies and minutes of governing body meetings.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the skills of children entering the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the progress they make, and the accuracy of the school's assessment of their progress
- the attainment and progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 in their writing
- the impact on teaching and learning of recent staff and leadership changes, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of leaders and the governing body in managing change, monitoring teaching and learning, and their capacity for driving sustained improvement in the future.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average infant school. The numbers on roll have increased significantly this year. The school serves a mixed community, mainly from the immediate area. The majority of pupils are of White British background. There are a number of minority ethnic groups, the largest being of other White origin. A small but growing number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have speech, language and communication difficulties, is similar to that of most schools. The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club. The school has a number of awards, including Activemark, Healthy School, International School, and Fair Trade.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is known to many as the village school in the town, because although small, it has pupils of many nationalities, whose every need is known to a caring and compassionate staff. The school has a number of strengths, in particular its ability to build the confidence, independence and self-esteem of every pupil. One parent expressed the views of many when commenting, 'I believe the school is exceptional' children are given such self-esteem and confidence in their progress.' This is commendable because there have been major changes in the staff during the last year, and a significant increase in pupil numbers. All teachers, the deputy headteacher and the headteacher are very new to the school. They have managed to maintain continuity in providing pupils with a good start in their education and personal development. This, together with decisive guidance from a strong governing body, indicates the school has a good capacity for improvement in the future. Governors have ensured that the school has maintained its effectiveness through a period of considerable staffing upheaval. The headteacher and staff share similar ambition for raising achievement further, and also promoting a thoroughly inclusive school, providing for the needs of pupils with very diverse cultural backgrounds. Leaders and staff also ensure that pupils are very well cared for, are safe, and that the needs of the most vulnerable are effectively supported. The school is an integral part of the local community, and pupils are also involved with wider communities throughout the world. Pupils show great enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning, demonstrated by the improvement in their attendance in the last few months. Most behave very well at all times, although a small number can occasionally become over-excited, requiring calming by, in particular, very competent and experienced teaching assistants.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this continues in Years 1 and 2. By the time they leave, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above the national average. The school recognises, though, that writing needs still more attention in order that all pupils reach their true potential. Better use of assessment data is leading to higher expectations among leaders that pupils can reach more challenging targets in writing. All groups of pupils are achieving well, including those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Teaching is good and provides a wide range of learning experiences through a good and enriched curriculum. Teachers have settled quickly into their new roles and are making an effective and supportive team with all other members of staff. The leadership and management of the school are good. The energetic headteacher wears his heart on his sleeve and continually shows his passion and care for all pupils, who enjoy his

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encouragement, challenge and sympathy and the fact that he knows them as individuals. He realises, though, that there is a need to share more evenly the school leadership roles in order to fulfil all the school priorities. This includes the monitoring of teaching and learning by other leaders. The school is still in a transitional stage, but looks poised to accelerate progress at all levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the improvement of writing in Years 1 and 2 so that attainment becomes as good as that in reading and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that new assessment systems and pupil progress data are firmly in place and used regularly and accurately
 - combining pupils' good reading skills with their improving phonic skills, and applying them more systematically to their own writing
 - giving pupils more opportunities to extend their writing across the whole curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The school has been successful in maintaining above-average attainment in reading and mathematics for several years. Attainment in writing has not been quite as strong, although it has improved steadily and is generally above average. However, the school realises that more pupils could reach higher levels of writing and is actively pursuing new strategies for improvement. The introduction of phonic learning groups each morning for all pupils is already improving reading, as was observed during the inspection when four different ability groups were clearly making good progress. A school priority is to use these developments as an aid to maintaining and then accelerating writing skills. The great majority of pupils achieve well in their learning and make good progress, after a good start in the Reception class. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Personalised intervention is proving effective, particularly for pupils with speech problems, because of the consistent efforts made by staff to encourage speaking skills. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress and show great determination in their learning. New assessment procedures indicate that pupils in Years 1 and 2 this year are making good gains in their learning, which was confirmed by a study of pupils' work. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils all enjoy going to school and are happy there. This is shown by the way attendance has improved markedly, to reach average levels. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own individuality while retaining an awareness of care and safety for others; as one said, 'I'm very nice to people and help them when they cry', and another, 'If you hurt anyone's feelings, it is really bad.' Pupils are responsible and very lively but respectful to each other and adults. Although a few are capable of being very challenging to teachers, they understand when they overstep the mark. They realise very clearly that they might lose some of their privileged

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golden time and are suitably contrite. Pupils love sitting in the 'VIP' chair when they have done well, and celebrate in their exciting assemblies. During the inspection pupils behaved very well, especially when under the pressure of performing the Christmas play. Although they describe the occasional example of what they understand as bullying, they are certain that staff deal with this quickly and fairly. They know the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, several maintaining that fruit is their favourite part of school. Pupils are involved regularly in local community activities, and are active in supporting charities. Their preparation for the future is good because they have good basic skills and, in the accurate words of a parent, are 'developing skills in communication, empathy, teamwork, decision making and problem solving'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers work effectively with their teaching assistants to provide for the varying needs of each pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of lessons are well structured and proceed at a good pace, but occasionally teachers take too long to start planned practical activities, so pupils can become

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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restless. There are good relationships between adults and pupils, and pupils are strongly encouraged to develop independence in thought and action. Consequently pupils develop self-confidence and enquiring minds quickly, even the shyest and most reticent, and become enthusiastic speakers and questioners. This can lead sometimes to over-exuberant and excited behaviour, but teachers usually find a good balance between managing pupils' learning and encouraging them to respond positively. This was seen to good effect in the production of 'Christmas time in the land of Rhyme', when all pupils performed confidently and cheerfully on several different occasions for large audiences.

The curriculum is broad and gives pupils good learning opportunities in and out of school. There are good partnerships with other local schools, especially the junior school, which encourage effective transition. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning in many subjects, but enjoy most of all their 'golden time', when they can choose from a range of activities as a result of their hard work in the previous week. There is good provision for the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. However, in order to develop further pupils' writing skills, they need more opportunities for extended writing across all areas of the curriculum.

The school provides a caring and welcoming environment for all pupils. Pupils are confident in their safety at school, and name many adults they can turn to if in need. Provision for their protection and risk assessment is robust as a result of the particular vigilance of the governing body. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is developing effectively as a result of increased use of external services and the appointment of a new experienced coordinator. Rigorous procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality are also improved, resulting in much better attendance in the last year. The school makes good extended provision through a breakfast club and after-school club.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has taken little time in making an impact on the whole-school community. His ambition for improvement and beliefs in the best ways to accomplish these aims are being continually promoted. He is highly visible throughout the school, and is very proactive with all pupils and the parent community. He realises, though, that there is a danger of him trying to do too many things himself, so the school is planning

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for a wider dispersal of leadership responsibilities. Both new and existing staff are embracing the changes being introduced by the headteacher. Significantly, an extremely active governing body share the staff's belief in full inclusivity for pupils and the need for pupils to develop confidence and a wide range of life skills. The staff are developing into a mutually supportive, well-motivated team in a very lively learning environment where pupils are given many opportunities to progress in their learning and personal development.

Leaders realise that although the school has ensured that attainment has remained above average for some years, there is still room for improvement, as for example in pupils' writing. The monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning is improving, especially with the introduction of new assessment systems. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is regular but mostly informal. The school is planning for more structured recording, and wider sharing of this, so that there are clear guidelines and targets for making teaching and learning even more effective. The governing body makes a very effective contribution to the management of the school, and is both supportive and robustly challenging to leaders. Many governors were seen helping in and around school, a regular occurrence, during the inspection. They ensure that all safeguarding and other legal requirements are firmly in place. Parents and carers are consulted often about their views about the school's provision, and are not afraid to express their opinions. They think highly of the school, value the regular access they have to the headteacher and staff, and make significant contributions to school resources.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. It is strong in the very diverse local community, and is developing links with a school in Cardiff and Kathmandu. Pupils are also encouraged to participate in many fund-raising activities for charities such as the North London Hospice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children enter the Reception class with the skills expected for their age, and make good progress in all areas of learning. They come to the school from a large number of pre-school nurseries, but settle in to school routines remarkably quickly. This is because teaching is consistently good, and children's welfare and safeguarding are promoted well. Consequently, children enter Year 1 with above average skills.

The adults are very successful in extending the self-confidence and independence of the Reception children. As a result, children's communication skills are well above those expected for their age. Their skills in writing are developing well because of the school's recent concentration on developing phonic skills. Activities are stimulating and well planned for both indoor and outdoor learning. Children's natural inquisitiveness is continually encouraged, such as when some boys were observed trying to work out levels of guttering to take water away. However, the outdoor activity area is very open to the elements and the school is planning to improve this resource.

Children are well behaved. Although very excited during the inspection about their part in the Christmas production, their performances were excellent, speaking and singing enthusiastically and concentrating fiercely on doing their best. Relationships in the class are good and children respect adults and each other. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and her teaching assistant make a very good team, monitor and evaluate provision well, and have much improved assessment systems. Relationships with parents are very good. However, some would appreciate the opportunity for meetings earlier in the school year to hear how their children are progressing in their new school. Transition arrangements into Year 1 are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses received from three quarters of the parents and carers indicated a very great majority of them approved of the education their children are receiving. They feel that their children are safe and enjoy going to school, that teaching and leadership are good and that their children make good progress in their learning. A small minority of parents

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expressed concerns about how the school manages the occasional challenging behaviour of some pupils. The inspection team feels that the school is managing behaviour effectively. A few would also like more information on how their children are doing. The inspection team believes that information on children's progress could be given earlier than at present after children have just started school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grasvenor Avenue Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	66	19	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	73	16	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	36	30	51	7	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	49	226	44	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	42	23	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	54	22	37	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	54	24	41	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	42	21	36	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	46	25	42	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	42	23	39	8	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	42	26	44	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	54	21	36	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	63	20	34	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grasvenor Avenue Infant School, Barnet EN5 2BY

Your school gives you a good start to your education, cares for you very well and keeps you safe.

We had an exciting and eventful two days with you, and thank you for making us so welcome. Your Christmas show was terrific, and I was lucky enough to visit it twice. Your singing and acting were very good. We are pleased that you like coming to school, care for each other and talk so interestingly about your learning. After all the hard-working children we saw, I'm not sure though whether to believe the child who said to me, 'To tell you the truth, I don't really like working hard!' We think that most of you behave very well at all times. Some of you sometimes become a bit too excited in your learning, so we would like you to try to be a little calmer, even if you are enjoying yourselves. We are pleased you like your teachers and their assistants, and enjoyed watching so many of you talking to the headmaster you all call 'Jack'. We are pleased also that your parents say that the school provides well for you.

You are taught well by your teachers and assistants, and you have many interesting opportunities to learn as well as some good clubs. We think you are learning well in ICT, reading and mathematics, and in your new phonics lessons. Your writing is getting better, but we think you can help make it even better. We have asked your school help improve your writing more quickly by:

- making sure teachers use all the information they have about you to help you improve
- helping you to use your good reading skills and better learning of phonics in the way you are learning to write
- giving you more chances to write about all the things you do in school.

Thanks once more for being so polite and interested in what we were doing. Good luck in the future!

Yours sincerely

Rod Braithwaite

Lead Inspector

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