

Grangetown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108758
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337144
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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 of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Catcherside
Headteacher	Mr Les McAnaney
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. A large amount of time was spent in classrooms; inspectors visited 10 lessons and all 10 class teachers were observed. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, talked to parents, analysed 59 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at completed questionnaires from staff and pupils. The team also looked at the pupils' progress data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the local authority's support plan, school policies and procedures; scrutinised pupils' current and past work; and spoke to the School Improvement Partner to discuss his reports and statement of action.

- the current achievement, progress and attainment of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English as an additional language
- the effectiveness of leadership and management to sustain improvements in the quality of learning in order to eradicate the legacy of underachievement and underperformance.

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school in the former dock area south-east of Sunderland city centre. Nearly all the pupils are from a White British background with a small number who are new to learning English as an additional language. The proportion eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average although there are very few pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school manages the Sure Start funded Daisychain Day Care on the site. This provision was not looked at as part of this inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 26-place Nursery and a Reception class. The headteacher had been in post for only four weeks at the time of the inspection but had worked collaboratively with the acting headteacher and local authority officers during the autumn term.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and attainment in Years 1 to 6 and in the quality of teaching, learning, support and intervention.

As a result of effective strategies established by senior leaders the slide, over time, in attainment has been arrested and the rate of progress is quickening, but pupils' attainment remains low. The progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English as an additional language, has been too slow and therefore inadequate. This is because since the previous inspection leadership and staffing have been unsettled, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and learning is lacking in enjoyment and challenge. Information from the robust monitoring of pupils' current progress, evidence from work scrutiny and lesson observations reveal the strong impact of the positive action taken from September 2009.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and improving because senior leaders have established clear principles for right and wrong. The atmosphere in classrooms is characterised by good relationships and encouragement. Improved attendance reflects the continual promotion of the benefits that regular attendance brings. Pupils recognise the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. The school council members are proud of their developing role in contributing to school improvement. Pupils make positive contributions to local events but have limited opportunities to find out about the diversity that exists in national and global communities.

Teaching is satisfactory with examples of good practice. Activities are well matched to pupils' individual needs, interests and talents and provide appropriate challenge. Assessment information is available but is not used well enough to extend challenge and widen pupils' understanding. For example, too few open-ended questions are used to test pupils' thinking. Whilst pupils' learning needs are known and early identification made of any slips in progress, sharply-focussed intervention and targeted support are not consistently embedded in practice.

The senior leaders have demonstrated much drive and ambition as they tackle the legacy of underachievement and variation in the quality of learning, support and intervention. After a period of much instability, staff are settled and confident. Self-evaluation has rightly identified areas of weakness. Strong leadership has made

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effective use of the valuable partnership with the local authority to establish targeted action plans which have a relentless focus on raising achievement. Teamwork and subject leadership has been strengthened and staff talent and skill has been nurtured to ensure that all are aware of what is expected of them. Successful, collaborative working between the acting headteacher and headteacher, ably supported by governors, has ensured that there is a clear and accurate view of what needs to be done. Their actions have had a strong impact in many areas of school life reflecting the ambition that is being successfully embedded. Together, this reflects the secure and strengthening capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and raise their attainment in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - - raising the expectations of all staff of what pupils can achieve
 - - making certain all activities are enjoyable and challenging
 - - providing more opportunities for pupils to consider, reason, speculate and explain their thinking.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, support and intervention by:
 - - ensuring all learning has a clear focus on how different pupils learn and how their achievement can be boosted
 - - making certain that assessment information informs the planning of lessons
 - - further developing target-setting to ensure all pupils are aware of what they need to do next.
- Broaden the range of curriculum opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of beliefs and cultures both nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Over the past three years pupils' rate of progress has been much too slow resulting in low attainment by the end of Year 6 in all subjects. Since last September, robust and reliable progress-checking systems have been put in place. This information, coupled with inspection evidence, reveals that the higher expectations and improved quality of learning are having a strong impact on attainment, and progress is accelerating for all pupils. Although the progress information is not yet fully exploited in lessons or in intervention and support planning, pupils' attainment is rising.

Pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics and a little below average in science, all in line with their challenging targets. In lessons where tasks take account of pupils' needs and interests, activities are well matched to ability and enjoyable. Here, pupils have confidence to express a view and they are increasingly fulfilling their potential. When tasks are more mundane or pupils are passive and not sufficiently engaged, the rate of progress is not as rapid. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language do not always make consistent progress because the quality of intervention and support is too variable.

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Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and improving steadily as pupils are taught to take more responsibility for their actions. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and express confidence that senior leaders are successfully tackling inappropriate behaviour and 'rough play'. They have a good understanding of the benefits that regular exercise and a balanced and varied diet bring. The school council members are enthusiastic about their contributions to school improvement and appreciate that their views are taken seriously. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with the school providing a range of positive opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour. The school works hard to promote the value of regular attendance and this is reflected in much improved attendance. A positive and optimistic atmosphere pervades classrooms. Good transition arrangements with the local secondary school and a firm focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are adding to the quality of preparation for pupils' next stage in learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Recent staff changes and restructuring of subject leadership responsibilities, with a firm

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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emphasis on raising achievement, are having a very positive impact. As a result of recent good leadership of teaching and learning, all teaching is at least satisfactory and there are some examples of good teaching in both key stages. In lessons where expectations are more demanding, tasks engage pupils' interests and provide first-hand, 'fun' learning experiences. These encourage pupils to think for themselves, work independently and apply their skills to solve problems. In lessons where progress is slower, learning does not engage or capture interest well enough and pupils are not consistently required to aim for high standards, for example, in their layout and presentation of work. Assessment practice is developing and helps inform the next stages of learning, although its use across the school is not fully embedded. The quality of support and guidance is variable. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is often not well enough structured, step-by-step, to meet their individual needs. Older pupils are aware of their targets but are sometimes less certain of how to improve and get to the next level.

Overall the curriculum is satisfactory. Imaginative approaches have been introduced in literacy and numeracy lessons to improve pupils' skills. Opportunities are being provided for pupils to extend these skills across the curriculum although this is at an early stage of development. Senior leaders recognise that there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to apply their thinking skills to solve problems. Specialist teaching is used to add richness to the curriculum, for example, in teaching pupils French and learning to play a musical instrument. Weekly updates have recently been introduced to give parents and carers advice about how they can best help and support their children's development and boost achievement. The provision for the pupils' personal development is being systematically improved, for example, by watching the visiting lifeguard demonstrate the beach flag system so pupils can swim safely in the sea. However, currently it does not offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to find out about the diverse nature of the country and the wider world in which they live.

Pastoral care is good and parents appreciate the good care that staff provide, for example, the manner in which pupils new to learning English as an additional language are thoughtfully welcomed and included in all activities. Yet, those at risk of underachieving are not always identified quickly enough.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

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There has been a seamless transition between the acting headteacher and the newly appointed headteacher. A consistent feature is the strong desire to raise attainment and achievement evident in well-led developments to improve teaching and learning. Seniors leaders, with adept encouragement from the local authority, have established a clear vision for the school's future. Sensitive management of staff ensures that the hardworking team share the same vision and ambition. Staff feel valued, their confidence rising as their talents and skills are nurtured. The committed and enthusiastic governors are developing a clear grasp of their roles and responsibilities and appreciate the benefits of holding the school to account. Subject leaders understand the expectations that senior leaders have of them in the drive to improve.

The school works hard to promote inclusion and tackle discrimination, which is reflected in the happy, friendly atmosphere and improving behaviour. However, senior leaders do recognise that pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and, whilst there are good links with the local community, opportunities for the pupils to experience the diverse beliefs and cultures in the world around them are limited. All safeguarding and child protection procedures are secure, meet statutory requirements and incorporate recommended practice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry into the Nursery are well below those expected for their age. A small minority arrive with weak communication skills especially in their speech development. A strength of the provision is the welcoming, happy, friendly atmosphere

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which ensures that children settle confidently into routines and develop early independence. Resources are well organised and activities allow free flow between all areas. However, children have limited opportunities to instigate their own learning so that they can explore and investigate, whether outdoors or indoors. Opportunities for children to learn how to use new technology are limited. Staff conscientiously support children as they learn and play although follow-up questioning does not always probe sufficiently or promote the open-ended enquiry to extend thinking. Children listen and respond positively to adult guidance. They understand the benefits of good hygiene habits, for example, by washing away the glue after modelling. Overall, children's behaviour is good although a small number can be easily excited and at times too animated. Currently, children make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave Reception the majority are working towards the levels expected for their age with an increasing number starting to exceed the average. The recently appointed manager has set out a secure vision for improvement. A rigorous system of observations and focussed assessments is now in place. The good links that have been quickly established with Daisychain, the onsite day care provider, are leading to the effective identification of individual needs, talents and rates of progress. However, despite this good start it is too early to judge the full impact of the actions taken to improve the effectiveness of the provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Of those who responded, a very large majority of parents were extremely positive about the school. All parents expressed high praise for the enjoyment provided by the school and said that it keeps their children safe. Parents did express concerns about the impact of unsettled staffing on their children's progress. Parents might find it helpful to know that in relation to the small number of concerns received, inspectors found that these issues were being effectively addressed and managed by the school following the appointment of the new headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grangetown Primary 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 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	46	28	47	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	56	18	31	3	5	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	36	28	47	7	12	3	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	49	21	36	6	10	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	27	46	26	44	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	36	27	46	9	15	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	36	30	51	5	8	3	5
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)	21	36	26	44	8	14	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	39	24	41	6	10	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	41	21	36	7	12	5	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	41	24	41	6	10	4	7
The school is led and managed effectively	22	37	26	44	3	5	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	42	22	37	7	12	3	5

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.



8 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grangetown Primary School, Sunderland, SR2 8PX

Thank you for being so friendly, considerate and helpful when inspectors visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Grangetown especially the conversations we had with you, your teachers and other adults.

I would like to tell you some of the positive things about your school.

- The staff work hard to make certain you enjoy school.
- You obviously like school and this is reflected in your improving attendance.
- You know how to stay safe and keep fit and active so that you remain healthy.
- The school enjoys good partnerships with the local secondary school, the onsite children's day-care and support staff and agencies.
- Your newly appointed headteacher is determined to continue to improve your school.

Although Grangetown is improving, it still needs to make some further important improvements. It has, therefore, been given a 'notice to improve' because you can do much better than you are currently. Another inspector will come to check on how things are going. I have asked your teachers to:

- help you gain better test and examination results and learn more quickly in Years 1 to 6
- to make all your lessons of high quality to strengthen your learning, making sure that all of you achieve as well as you possibly can
- provide you with more opportunities to think about the different lives and beliefs of other people in Britain and across the world.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can, behaving sensibly and by attending regularly. We hope the school will keep on building on its strengths.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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