



Greengate Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112206
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289202
Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Keith Oglesby

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Greengate Street
School category	Community		Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	7–11		LA14 1BG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 894628
Number on roll (school)	310	Fax number	01229 894629
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Joe Wardman
		Headteacher	Mr Colin Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Greengate is a larger than average three-form entry school, close to the centre of Barrow. It serves an area of high deprivation. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. Twenty two pupils have statements of special educational need, proportionately higher than is found in most schools nationally. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school holds the Healthy School award and the Artsmark and Activemark gold awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own judgement, that Greengate is a good school with some outstanding features. These include the inspiring leadership of the headteacher, the curriculum and the excellent quality of care and support for every pupil.

The headteacher has been in post for many years and has lost none of his determination to provide the best possible education for the pupils in the school. Parents, governors, staff and pupils all recognise this. Amongst many positive comments, one parent wrote, 'I cannot commend the headteacher enough for his continued commitment, enthusiasm and dedication to his pupils'. Leadership and management at all levels are good. All adults are encouraged to develop their skills and get involved in the work of the school. Consequently, everyone feels valued, supported and part of an effective team.

Pupils achieve well in their personal development and academically. This is because they enjoy school and lessons, behave well and want to learn. They show respect for adults and for each other. The exceptional arrangements for care, support and guidance ensure that all are fully included in everything the school has to offer. Teachers listen to the views of their pupils and value the many contributions that they make to the life of the school.

Most of the teaching is good. Lessons are lively, interesting and well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils make good progress, some overcoming personal and learning hurdles on the way. Standards are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6 and are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection, although standards in writing remain below what they should be. There are other inconsistencies in the rate of progress in some classes. This is because a small proportion of lessons do not have the pace and high expectations evident elsewhere.

The curriculum is outstanding and adapted well to meet the needs of all the pupils. There is an excellent range of extra activities and events. Many of these are linked to other local organisations. This is an outward-looking school, which has become a hub of activity in the local community. These links provide opportunities for pupils and parents to extend their experience and skills; for example as allotment holders, working with the elderly or representing the school council at district meetings.

Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The school looks critically at everything it does and is constantly seeking ways to do better. Its capacity to improve is good. Finance is well managed and the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons match the quality of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They join the school with below average levels of attainment, but reach nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

National test results dipped in 2006, particularly in English. This reversed two years of rising standards in all subjects. The decline was due to the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this cohort, as well as some pupils who were affected by personal or family problems. The work seen during the inspection matches earlier test results and indicates that the 2006 results were not typical of current standards within the school. Standards are in line with those expected in reading, mathematics and science, although writing remains below average.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. This is because of the good teaching and support they receive. The more able pupils also achieve well because teachers make sure they are challenged. There are some variations between boys' and girls' progress in different year groups and subjects, but the school is quick to introduce strategies to deal with these. There is no consistent underachievement by any group of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils love coming to school. This is clearly reflected in the above average attendance. They work hard, show consideration to each other and are proud of their school. Behaviour is nearly always good. Pupils who sometimes find this difficult are managed very well. As one boy put it, 'The headteacher and teachers try to get through to you, reason with you, and don't jump down your throat'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school celebrates every possible achievement, however small, to raise self-esteem and motivate pupils to do the best they can. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example as a trained playground buddy, or on the effective school council. Pupils feel safe and trust the school to look after them. They are learning how to live safe, active and healthy lives and make sensible decisions. The excellent school cook works closely with staff and children to emphasise the importance of a good diet.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They use technology confidently and make good progress in developing basic skills. Social skills are extended through active lessons and the many valuable visits and links with the local community. The school is especially proud that pupils move on with positive attitudes and self-esteem to face what lies ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, most is good and some outstanding. Lessons are calm, orderly and purposeful, because the pupils want to learn and please their teacher. A strength everywhere is the care for each individual; teachers make sure that everyone is included and has a chance to succeed. Relationships are excellent. There is a strong team of support staff who make a valuable contribution to learning. The staff make lessons interesting and relevant, often using technology effectively. Consequently, pupils are nearly always motivated, busy and enjoy the work. One boy was anxious to point out however, that 'Just because we enjoy the work it doesn't mean we are not learning'.

In a small number of lessons, pupils spend too much time listening. As a result, concentration and behaviour can dip and learning slows. Sometimes teachers do not leave enough time for pupils to make the most of their independent work. However, a strength in this school is that all teachers are self-critical and want to do even better. The very good teamwork and the expertise available equip the school well to raise teaching standards even higher.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has a highly effective curriculum with an outstanding range of extra clubs, visits and events. These are popular and well supported; for example, the orchestra has almost fifty members. Parents also appreciate what the school provides; one wrote, 'The school offers a lot more than the National Curriculum, staff put a lot of time into extracurricular work and should be credited for this'. A clear focus on developing pupils' spoken English, reading, writing, numeracy and computer skills contributes well to the good achievement seen. The school recognises the particular needs and interests of their pupils and adapts the curriculum to meet these. For example, pupils enjoy the extra challenges built into the 'every child has a talent' scheme. Effective extra help is provided when learning slows, for example in reading and mental calculation work. One particularly successful initiative has been the introduction of themed writing weeks. Imaginative spaces are created to suggest settings and ideas for stories. Pupils enjoy working in these and sometimes surprise even themselves by the quality of their efforts. The school reviews its curriculum regularly; for example, it has recently adapted the science curriculum to improve standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, support and guidance provided by the school is outstanding. The school values all its pupils and provides a safe and stimulating environment for them. Pupils know that adult help is never far away. As one child commented, 'The teachers

stand right by you if you're ill or upset'. Staff make great efforts to ensure that pupils are happy in school and to overcome factors that could interfere with learning. A counsellor is available to help with pupils' emotional well-being. Parents are very appreciative of the school and recognise the quality of care and the determination to help pupils succeed. One wrote, 'The school should be very proud of the reputation it has'.

The school has some inventive systems for rewarding good conduct, effort and success, which underpin the personal development of pupils. For instance, the pupils value the Gold Cards, which 'buy' them privileges. There are well-established procedures for child protection and security. The quality of display is superb and reflects the school's ethos of celebrating pupils' achievement in all its forms.

Teachers' use of thorough assessment and tracking procedures monitor and guide pupils' progress. Pupils, particularly in the older classes, value the practical guidance they are given through individual targets and teachers' marking that tells them what they need to do better. Pupils with learning difficulties have high quality support from experienced staff, enabling them to enjoy school and make good progress. There are good arrangements to welcome new pupils and to smooth the transition to secondary schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. His high profile presence, vision and energy inspire adults and children alike and win the confidence of parents. He is ably supported by a highly skilled senior team. Consequently, morale is high and adults work together very well to ensure the pupils gain the best from every moment in school.

There are effective systems to keep an eye on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are quick to act when achievement falls, as shown by the decisive and rapid response to the performance of some pupils in the 2006 national tests.

Governors support the school well with frequent visits. They are increasingly active in the evaluation of the school's teaching and results. There are strong and productive links with other schools and the local authority.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Greengate Junior School

Greengate Street

Barrow-in-Furness

Cumbria

LA14 1BG

28 January 2007

Dear Pupils

As you know, we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to thank you for being so helpful and willing to talk to us. We had a great two days and enjoyed seeing you and your teachers in action. Many of you told us you were proud of your school; you should be. What a pity we missed one of your famous shows, although the Year 3 assembly was pretty good.

We think some of the best things about your school are:

- the way you show respect to your teachers and each other
- you work hard and get involved in lessons
- all the clubs, visitors and special events that we know you appreciate
- the way all the adults go the extra mile to make sure you are safe, happy and learning
- the lessons - your teachers work so hard to make them interesting and demanding
- the time and energy that Mr Smith and all the staff put into the school. Does he ever have time to sleep?

We think your school could be even better if all the lessons were as good as the best ones, so you all made even better progress. Nearly all lessons are really good anyway, so you are nearly there. Of course lessons are not just about teachers, you have to do your bit!

Another improvement needed is the standard of your writing; it's a bit behind the other subjects. We saw some excellent examples and we can see it's improving, but it could be even better.

Yours sincerely

Keith Oglesby, Yvonne Clare, Jen Rotheram.

The inspection team