

Grange Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 100791 |
| Local Authority | Southwark |
| Inspection number | 307482 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Wendy Simmons |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 285 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr J Tibbitts |
| Headteacher | Mrs P Haynes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 September 2002 |
| School address | Webb Street London SE1 4RP |
| Telephone number | 020 7771 6121 |
| Fax number | 020 7771 6109 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Grange is a large school that serves a culturally and socially mixed community. Over half of all pupils receive free school meals and a significant proportion of pupils live in temporary local authority housing. There has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees, and an exceptionally high proportion of pupils join and leave the school throughout the year. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils from Black British, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds are the largest groups in the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in most schools. The school has the Quality Mark for Basic Skills and the Healthy School awards. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced high staff turnover.

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: 3

Grange Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The school has a welcoming ethos. The pupils and staff are friendly and, together with the good pastoral care, this ensures that pupils are happy, mostly enjoy school and usually behave well. The very strong partnership with parents and the community contributes much to the care and support provided for pupils. The strong support for new pupils means that they settle well and quickly begin the important business of learning. This is a significant strength of the school, as so many pupils are new to Britain or change schools repeatedly due to their housing needs and other family difficulties.

High staff turnover and ever increasing pupil mobility has slowed overall improvement more than leaders had hoped, but inspectors confirm that there has been unquestionable progress in the last year in raising levels of achievement, reflecting the good leadership. Parents have great confidence in the school. As one said, 'Since the beginning of the year I noticed some good changes in my daughter's progress'. While another noted that, 'The headteacher has made the school, turned it around, she is friendly and gets things sorted!' Inspectors agree with this, but in addition, they note that all managers and governors have shown a strong commitment to supporting the school through a challenging time.

In the last year, leaders have successfully improved pupils' achievement by lifting this from inadequate to satisfactory. Standards, by the end of Year 6 have been steadily improving since 2003 when they were at an exceptionally low level. They are now below average. From pupils' starting points, this reflects satisfactory overall achievement for all groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties. The progress that all pupils are making in their learning is also satisfactory. From the lessons seen and from the school's evaluations of pupils' progress, standards are continuing to rise in mathematics and English and the pace of improvement is good. Leaders are improving standards well because they work successfully as a team, have high expectations and ensure that teaching and learning are steadily improving. Although some lessons are good and even outstanding, there are not yet enough of these to help standards to rise to the best possible effect. Leaders have introduced an effective system to check pupils' progress and make sure that those who do not make good progress are given intensive support. Sometimes, however, pupils are not always sure enough about how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

As a result of the focus on developing English, pupils quickly learn to communicate, grow in confidence and feel good about themselves. Effective initiatives have been implemented to improve reading and writing. As a result, pupils are now doing well in gaining English skills as they move through the school. This is important, as many pupils are new to learning English or have learning difficulties that link to literacy skills. The school has also been focusing on mathematics and this is working well, as pupils are becoming more skilled at doing mental calculations and in solving problems. Leaders are ambitious to raise achievement. With this in mind, they know that pupils need to do more investigations in mathematics and science and then talk about and explain their thinking, so that they can gain a deeper knowledge and understanding.

The school offers an interesting range of activities, so that pupils enjoy taking exercise, know how to be safe in the world around them and develop respect for others. The high quality music

work contributes much to their enjoyment of school and their spiritual and cultural development, as evident when they sang, 'All Nations Rise'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the school in the Nursery, their social, language and communication skills are much lower than is usually expected for their age. Caring relationships help children to settle quickly into school life. They make good progress because activities are interesting and adults help children to learn in different ways. There is a good focus on basic skills. For example, adults model how to speak English successfully and introduce a good range of new words, although they sometimes miss the chance to help children to speak in fuller sentences. Children quickly begin to develop important social skills and gain enthusiasm for learning. As a result of improved provision, far more children are reaching the expected goals as they join Year 1 than was the case two years ago. The new outside area provides good opportunities for children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science by ensuring that pupils do more investigative activities and have plenty of opportunities to talk about their learning and explain their thinking.
- Lift the quality of all teaching and learning to good so that pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups.
- Make sure that pupils know exactly how to improve their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils are making faster progress as they move through the school than was the case in 2005 and 2006. As a result, their overall achievement is satisfactory. The school tracks pupils' progress and performance well and this confirms a trend of improving standards. However, unexpected arrivals and departures of pupils can have a sudden and often negative impact on standards. Standards overall have been steadily improving by the end of Year 6 since 2003, although more pupils reach the expected level in English and science than is the case in mathematics. This is why the school has been focusing on mathematics and is on track to reach the challenging targets set for the end of the current school year. The school has been focusing successfully on raising standards in Reception and Years 1 and 2. As a result, standards in the lessons seen show a marked improvement on past exceptionally low performance in reading, and further improvement in writing and mathematics. Assessment data support this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Effective provision in the Foundation Stage helps the youngest children to learn how to work with others, take turns, negotiate and develop concentration. Most pupils enjoy school and this is evident in their improved attendance. Most behave well, know the rules and usually

follow them, but sometimes pupils do not do as they are told to quickly enough. Pupils thoroughly enjoy making music and taking part in community Gospel singing and jazz events. They select healthy foods and the high quality school lunches contribute much to this. Pupils are keenly developing fitness and greatly value the new outside play spaces. As one pupil commented, 'At first we didn't like doing hard exercise but, now we are getting fitter, so it's good'. Pupils are developing helpful English skills and important social skills, so that they are suitably prepared for their future lives. However, although they are getting better at basic skills in mathematics, there is a need to extend this more, so that pupils are better equipped to work out how to solve real life mathematical problems.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The high number of newly qualified teachers are well supported and, like others, are working hard to make learning successful for pupils. Lessons are usually well planned, so that pupils of different abilities are given suitably challenging work and are well supported by teaching assistants. The introduction of ability group teaching and targeted support is helping pupils to achieve better standards. Relationships are good in lessons and make for a happy and busy working ethos. Almost all teachers show good skills at managing pupils' behaviour, although this is not consistent and occasionally poor behaviour slows learning. Teachers are sometimes over keen to talk too much at the first part of the lesson and this limits the time left for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to work independently. For example, in both mathematics and science there is room for pupils to develop their understanding more, especially through explaining their ideas. Teaching and learning in English is good because it ensure that pupils widen their understanding and use of vocabulary.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Leaders have modified the curriculum well. As a result, there is a more rigorous approach to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and this is helping standards to improve in reading. The 'Big Write' project is helping pupils to edit and extend their writing by using interesting words and punctuation more accurately. In mathematics, pupils are doing plenty of mental calculations, but do not yet have enough opportunities to apply their skills to real life problem solving. In science, more experiments have been introduced but sometimes these are dull and do not inspire pupils enough. Pupils especially value the extra clubs and visits. The school provides a good range of musical activities, including lively weekly drumming and gospel singing sessions, which are inspirational and contribute much to pupils' personal development. The curriculum helps pupils to explore their feelings and imaginations well through art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The regular conferencing between teachers and pupils ensures that pupils have the opportunity to grow in confidence and express their opinions. There are effective systems in place to support pupils with learning difficulties, those whose first language is not English and newly arrived pupils. As a result, these groups are well supported and they make the same satisfactory progress as other learners. The school works well with outside agencies to enhance the support given

to pupils and parents, and ensures that underperforming pupils are given extra support. Clear procedures are in place for Child Protection. Parents confirm that their children are well cared for and mostly pupils agree. However, a few pupils said that they have concerns about bullies and they would like more to be done about this; a few parents also noted this. Pupils often have a good knowledge of how to improve their English work in lessons, but in all subjects, the quality of marking, target setting and guidance on how to improve is too inconsistent to help pupils to make the best possible progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and what needs to be done to improve. The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations and the impact of their good work is seen in how they have helped the whole school team to improve achievement, especially in English, where pupils are now making good overall progress. Notably, the school does well at helping pupils to get to an average standard in their work. Staff are now correctly focused on mathematics. Their work has also led to good improvement in achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 in the last year. Middle managers provide good support. Detailed assessments and the effective monitoring of pupils' progress enables all leaders to focus on aspects of pupils learning that need to be improved. All leaders are ambitious to help pupils to make good progress and in many classes this is well underway. In recent years the close monitoring of the school's improvement plans, by the governors, has helped them hold the school to account about standards. As a result, they support the school well and have provided additional resources to raise achievement in subject such as mathematics. Continued improvement at the school is judged to be satisfactory.

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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

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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 | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| 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

3 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange Primary School, London, SE1 4RP

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how good it is and how well you are doing. Thank you for being friendly and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know our findings.

You go to a welcoming and caring school and your school is satisfactory, which means that most things are suitable for you but some aspects need to be better. You usually try hard in lessons and enjoy the different activities that the school provides. Most of you behave well and the school is helping you to become more confident. We know that you are making steady progress and we were pleased to see how well you are learning English skills. We want more of you to reach higher levels in your mathematics and science work. This is important, as it will help you to do well in the future. Well done for working hard on your writing, especially the way you are improving your work by using exciting vocabulary. Keep up the good work on doing calculations in mathematics. Teachers help you to understand new things and we are pleased how well you are trying to become as healthy as possible. The school lunches are delicious and I know that most of you agree with this. We especially like your gospel singing. It is fantastic! Please continue to come to school every day, always work hard and do what your teachers ask you to do as quickly as possible.

Your headteacher and all other teachers are keen to do the best they can for you. We want to help them, so we have asked them to:

- help more of you to reach higher levels in mathematics and science. This will mean doing more exciting investigation activities and having plenty of opportunities to talk about your learning and explain what you find out
- ensure that all lessons enable each one of you to learn as much as possible
- make sure that you know exactly how to improve your work.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector