

Grange Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124035
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328034
Inspection date	18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	208
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	68
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Richardson
Headteacher	Margaret Hassall
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Shobnall Close Burton-on-Trent DE14 2HU
Telephone number	01283 564325
Fax number	01283 564325

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

Improvements to achievement in reading.

The success the school has had in including children, parents and the community in everything it does, and the effect this has on children's learning and personal development.

The targets the school sets, and how well it uses what it knows about each child when it sets them.

Evidence was gathered from published assessment data, the school's own records, parents' questionnaires, lesson observations and interviews with staff, governors and children. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was also inspected. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Grange is a large infant school with two classes in each year group. Four of these classes fall into the EYFS age group, that is three to five years of age. Though mainly White British or Pakistani, the children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A large number start school with little or no English and among them they speak 18 different home languages. The proportion of children in receipt of free school meals is well above average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion joining or leaving the school after nursery.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. All children, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, which are very low. Parents speak very highly of the school. They recognise the school's many original and excellent features, one of which is that it does everything possible to empower them to help their children learn at home and at school. Parents describe the school as 'approachable', 'friendly and welcoming' and willing to do everything possible to help them and their children.

Governors emphasised that the school aims to ensure that every family as well as every child matters. It very successfully meets this aim by reaching out to the community in exemplary fashion. Through its excellent Family Learning Programme, it manages exceptionally well to bring different cultures together to help them learn about and understand each other. The work of the community cohesion team is particularly strong in this respect. An excellent example is the introduction of Friday prayers for Muslim children while other children experience a time for reflection. Children then have opportunities to share with each other what they are doing, why, and what it means to them, again fostering understanding and bringing them closer together.

The effect of the above on children's learning is evident in their sheer enjoyment of school, their excellent behaviour, and their very strong determination to do as well as they possibly can. When asked what the best thing about the school was, they answered with one voice, 'the hard work'. They then went on to praise their teachers for making it 'real fun' to learn, and for making the work harder as they got better. Attendance, however, is only satisfactory, mainly due to illness and to parents taking holidays abroad during term-time. Through its work with parents, the school has very significantly reduced the number of extended holidays taken. It also gives children tasks to do when they are abroad, which they share with their class when they return. This provides yet another forum for greater multicultural understanding and successfully minimises the impact of their absence on their progress.

Standards are above average overall. They are significantly above in mathematics and have been so for several years. The strong focus on speaking and listening from the moment children start school is very effective. It quickly enables children to develop a command of English on which they build successively, lesson by lesson. Staff are very skilled at this. Relatively speaking, children do least well in reading. Although above average at the higher level, the proportion reaching the expected level is broadly average. Reading is a priority in the school development plan. It is clear from discussions with children that they enjoy reading and that the daily phonics session is helping to improve their reading skills. They used their knowledge of phonics well in an excellent mathematics session where the teacher rightly insisted they read the names of the items going into their healthy picnic as well as calculating the cost of them. Such good practice is not evident in all lessons, however, and some teachers miss opportunities to reinforce reading skills as much as possible.

Teaching has many superb assets. Lessons arise day by day out of the staff's astute assessment of how well the children are learning. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how children learn. Their vibrant enthusiasm rubs off on the children, making learning exciting and enjoyable for them. As a result, all children's learning proceeds at a very fast pace. Teaching assistants and volunteers, all of whom have been checked for suitability, do a sterling job of enthusing

the children and guiding individuals. They are very alert to the children's many different needs. The systems for checking all aspects of children's progress work very well, enabling staff to take each child forward on its individual learning journey. The school's records show the very positive effect this has on their progress.

Children develop very strong leadership qualities as buddies, school councillors and playground mediators. They use their responsibilities really well, describing how they might diffuse an argument on the playground, help younger children, or make their views known to the headteacher. They feel very safe and valued in school and have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy living. They thoroughly enjoy the weekly afternoon of enrichment activities, covering sports and the arts, which form part of the school's excellent curriculum. As part of its extended curriculum, the school has taken parents and their children on a very successful day visit to Birmingham, and on a highly acclaimed outdoor pursuits weekend to give them new and exciting experiences. These activities successfully broaden their horizons and contribute greatly to the children's excellent personal development, well-being and emotional maturity.

Children are extremely well prepared for their future. They know and understand their targets and how to reach them. They greatly appreciate the excellent guidance they receive from their teachers, verbally and through written marking, saying, for example, that having to correct their mistakes means they learn quicker not to make the same mistake again. In this, they show a level of maturity well beyond their years. All of it forms an integral part of the excellent personal and academic care, guidance and support the school provides for the children.

A key factor in the school's success is the high calibre of leadership and management. The headteacher has created a fully dedicated team of staff and governors, all of whom share her high expectations of work and behaviour. Very challenging but manageable targets are set for children and for staff. The processes of self-evaluation and review are very rigorous. They are an extremely reliable guide to the school's performance. The headteacher, governors and key leaders keep a very close eye on how well teaching is moving children's learning on. Governors share their monitoring with the headteacher and, together with the staff, determine the way forward for the school. They also monitor very closely whether the money they have allocated for different purposes is put to best use in relation to improving children's learning. The school has a very strong track record of improvement and has every chance of maintaining this in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The EYFS shares the same outstanding features found in the school as a whole. It is led and managed very effectively. As a result, children make outstanding progress and reach the standards expected for the end of Reception. Already, only a few weeks into the term, nursery children have settled well and are beginning to work and play together. The close relationship with parents contributes greatly to this.

A significant proportion of children begin to speak English only after they start school. Highly skilled staff, several of whom speak a number of the children's languages themselves, help children to progress rapidly in communication, language and literacy. This benefits the rest of their learning, which is rich and rewarding. Indoors and out, they work and play with the same cheerfulness and enthusiasm. Staff observe them at all times, noting down how well they are doing, building on it, and continually challenging them to do better. As a result, reception

children develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem whether selecting from the many activities available to them, or working with the staff on focused activities. Children develop a real love of learning in this age group. Their welfare is exceptionally well promoted, and they are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading by ensuring that teachers reinforce reading skills wherever possible in all lessons.

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Annex A

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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Grange Infant School, Burton-on-Trent DE14 2HX

Thank you for your warm welcome and for sharing your thoughts with us in such a confident, open and friendly way. It was a delight to visit your school and we found it to be excellent, just as you and your parents said.

In my report, I have mentioned a great number of things that your school does really well. Here, I have tried to pick out the most important ones for you.

- You learn very fast and reach standards that are better than average by the time you leave the school.
- Your teachers teach you exceptionally well. Although your lessons are a lot of fun, a lot of serious learning goes on in them, and you become very eager to learn more and more.
- You all love working and playing together. Your teachers are really good at helping you and your parents understand all the different cultures in the school.
- You carry out your different jobs really well, and are confident that the staff really listen to your ideas about how to make your school better.
- The people who lead and manage your school make sure each one of you has the best possible education. This is why you do so well.

To help you do even better, your teachers now need to make sure they give you every opportunity to practise your reading skills. You can help them do this, for example, by recalling words you already know and by using letter sounds to help you read new words in different lessons.

Thank you again for a very memorable day in your school.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell Lead inspector