

Greenfields Community Primary School
School Review
July 2015

The review was carried out over three visits during the spring and summer terms of 2015 by a school improvement officer from North Tyneside Council's School Improvement Service. At the request of the headteacher, a series of activities were undertaken over 12 hours in school. The activities included, visits to lessons, looking at children's books, a learning walk, and focused discussions with school leaders, governors, parents and pupils. In addition, school documents were scrutinised including those describing the progress that groups of pupils were making. The findings of these visits are summarised in this cumulative report.

Leadership and Management are GOOD and improving.

The school's self-evaluation document judges leadership and management to be good.

- There is a clear and unfaltering drive for continuous improvement from the highly effective headteacher. The school's shared vision has been adopted by other leaders who are increasingly collegiate in their approach to bringing about further improvement.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to be highly visible around school and model the very best practice to staff. There is an increasing culture of self reflection. This leadership culture facilitates a clear and professional dialogue that holds all staff to account for their own performance and the impact that they have on outcomes for pupils.
- The impact of school leaders' work can be clearly seen throughout school. In Early Years displays clearly celebrate children's work, particularly in writing whilst a thematic approach linked to children's ideas is clear. Teachers now ask a key question at the start of each week, and are therefore able to carefully tailor learning opportunities in response to children's ideas and interests.
- In the nursery, resources and activities linked to the traditional story, Jack and the Beanstalk, provide many opportunities for exploration, science, maths, art, language and writing. School leaders describe further plans to develop additional outdoor provision to ensure that children have free-flow access to outdoor learning opportunities.
- A recent focus to engage the parents of very young children has been successful. Parents are now welcomed into the provision to discuss aspects of their children's learning and to discuss their successes, concerns and to support the staff team in meeting individual needs.
- Other parents are also extremely positive about the changes they have noted at the school. Some comment that their children are highly motivated by school because of the engaging curriculum that enables all pupils, including those with particular needs, to be appropriately challenged and thrive in the school's nurturing environment.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. In the very best lessons, teachers deliver an innovative and creative curriculum using teaching strategies that engage and motivate pupils. Teachers are encouraged to explore their interests and take risks to experiment with carefully planned strategies that further improve their methods. For example, in Key Stage 1, teachers have explored the 'growth mindset' initiative through the story of the Gruffalo. As a result, pupils became more resilient learners and made rapid progress.
- Pupils' books confirm that inspiring teaching is typical in an increasing number of classrooms. School leaders and governors agree that teaching is good overall and continues to improve.
- Middle leaders can now clearly articulate their understanding of where teaching is strongest and can explain the systems and processes that they implement to tackle any underachievement by groups of pupils. Leaders describe their direct correlation between the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Focused actions to eradicate weaker teaching are now implemented by phase leaders. This ensures that leaders at all levels understand their role in supporting the school's continuous improvement. Whilst the impact of leaders' actions is clear, they have yet to be sustained so that they have an even greater impact on pupils' attainment over time.
- Governors are effective and know the school and its priorities well. They are ambitious for the school and communicate their increasingly high expectations to the headteacher and her staff. For example, governors recognise that pupils' attendance at the school is below the national average. A robust action plan has been formed and governors visit the school to evaluate its effectiveness.
- Governors have recently received support from a National Leader of Governance. As a result, governors feel that their effectiveness is improving because their expectations of school leaders are now higher. Staff at the school are now held to account for the progress that groups of pupils make.
- There is a clear commitment by leaders that Greenfields will be an outstanding school in terms of its overall effectiveness. However, the impact of consistently effective leadership over time has yet to be fully realised.

The achievement of pupils is GOOD and is improving.

The school's self-evaluation document judges achievement to be good.

- Pupils achieve well overall at Greenfields. From individual starting points that are often below those typically expected, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress are at least similar to those found nationally.
- Rates of progress in the Early Years have increased and the proportion reaching a good level of development is likely to exceed the national average in 2015.

- Improvements to the way that early reading skills are taught mean that a greater proportion of pupils than is average now reach the expected reading standard in Year 1.
- In-year progress is stronger in reading and writing than it is in mathematics though all key indicators suggest that achievement is rising overall.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged, those who are disabled or those with special educational needs make at least the same good progress as their peers. The adults that work with them are resourceful in providing appropriate levels of support.
- At both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged classmates has narrowed in all subjects. This is because leaders have focussed their monitoring activities on specific groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching is GOOD and is improving.

The school's self-evaluation document judges teaching to be good.

- Changes brought about by the headteacher and her team have succeeded in improving the quality of teaching across subjects including English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are making good progress in each year group.
- School leaders have clear expectations about standards of marking and the application of the revised feedback policy. As a result there is a rapidly improving consistency to marking and feedback across the school. Teachers' marking of pupils' work now enables pupils to reflect on their learning and understand that a golden comment reflects the hard work and determination of 'going for gold'. Pupils now regularly act upon this written guidance and have opportunities to respond so that they can make good progress with their work.
- The teaching of reading is good and improving, particularly in Early Years and at Key Stage 1. A more rigorous approach to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) has quickly improved early reading skills amongst younger pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding the expected standard in reading in Year 1 has increased to well above the national average.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils achieve are consistently appropriate so that pupils' learning is usually successful. The impact that leaders have on the quality of teaching is apparent and teachers clearly relate the quality of their teaching to the achievement of their pupils. Teachers' performance management targets closely reflect these higher expectations.
- The most successful lessons are active and lively where both pupils and adults participate in meaningful, relevant learning. School leaders note that such high quality teaching is increasingly common.

Behaviour at the school is GOOD and is improving.

The school's self-evaluation document judges behaviour to be good.

- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and a good balance of friendship and respect helps to create a positive learning atmosphere and environment.
- The recently introduced behaviour policy effectively supports pupils' good behaviour by setting high expectations. These systems are now consistently applied by staff and as a result standards of behaviour have improved. Parents welcome the school's clear systems that reward pupils' good behaviour and regularly take the opportunity to discuss their children's needs at the start and end of the school day.
- Information about pupils who exhibit more challenging behaviours is closely tracked. Information about behaviour patterns is shared with parents and pupils to ensure that a close partnership is used to bring about the necessary improvements. One parent commented that 'the school now runs for children – it is not a system that they attend'.
- Pupils are confident in the school's ability to tackle the few incidences of bullying that occur from time to time. They welcome opportunities for older pupils to support their younger friends as trained playground buddies.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school because teachers and adults care for them. They appreciate the opportunity to receive personalised support through the use of the worry box and have confidence that their concerns and problems are taken seriously and resolved.

The overall effectiveness of Greenfields Community Primary School is therefore GOOD. The school's self evaluation document is accurate and accurately reflects the current (July 2015 position).

The school's development plan correctly identifies the strategies and actions needed to secure further improvement in the next academic year.

**Jonathan Chicken
North Tyneside School Improvement Service
July 2015**