

Greenbank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133332
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	381495
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Hewlett

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Alan Kennedy
Headteacher	Debra Wrigley
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Hewlett
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed 18 teachers teaching 21 lessons, of which three were joint observations with members of the senior team. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to 'support lessons' where specialist help is provided by trained assistants and they also listened to pupils read in four different year groups. Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. Also, they analysed 191 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Greenbank is much larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is that of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Almost three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost a half learning English as an additional language. This is over twice the figure found when the school was last inspected in 2008. The proportion of pupils who start or leave school other than at the normal time is well-above average. There is a high proportion of pupils who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. The school holds National Healthy School status and is a designated 'School of Excellence' for the teaching of German. The school meets the current government floor standard. The leadership team has been in place for 18 months and three new teachers joined the school at the start of the school year. The school operates its own breakfast and after-school clubs.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school where pupils achieve well academically and grow in self-confidence. This is because, as one pupil commented, everyone gets on here and all the adults really care about you.’ Good-quality, determined leadership from the headteacher has effectively tackled areas that were previously weaker so that pupils’ progress continues to improve and is good now across the school. Consequently, gaps in the performance of different groups are narrowing. The current Year 6 pupils are working at average levels in English and mathematics.
- Teaching, which is mainly of good quality and sometimes outstanding, underpins pupils’ good progress and enjoyment of learning. Teachers use a wide range of resources to help pupils understand what they are expected to do and to bring their learning to life. There is strong support for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, enabling most to make good progress. Opportunities are sometimes missed to provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils and there are occasions when the amount of time that teachers spend talking limits the opportunities for pupils to work independently on tasks. The marking of pupils’ work is often of high quality, but is not consistently of such a high standard across the school.
- Most pupils behave well and enjoy the wide range of activities that the school can offer them. Parents, carers and pupils are confident that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with promptly and the school is happy, orderly community where pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and the school successfully promotes an ethos of care and respect for others.
- School leaders and the governing body know the school well and have successfully tackled the right priorities. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well but there are too few opportunities for them to extend their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects and topics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress that pupils make in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils, especially the more able, are consistently provided with challenging tasks that extend their learning towards the higher levels
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply and hone their literacy and mathematical skills in subjects and topics across the curriculum.
- Build on the key features of good and outstanding teaching that exist across the school, so that it has a greater impact on pupils' learning in all classes by:
 - ensuring that lessons proceed at a brisk pace and there is not too much 'teacher talk'
 - checking that the work provided in all lessons matches the needs and abilities of all pupils
 - making sure that the agreed expectations for marking pupils' work are consistently delivered in all classes.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well from their skills on entering nursery, which are generally very low, particularly in language and social development. They make such good progress because pupils' attitudes to learning are so positive and because the school successfully promotes a culture of care which celebrates achievement. Most parents and carers have a similar view of their children's progress. School leaders' half-termly meetings with class teachers to discuss pupils' progress have enabled them to identify quickly individuals who are in danger of falling behind. This leads to extra support for those identified as facing barriers to learning and is proving very effective in increasing rates of progress.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is usually average and this is the case with the current cohort. Pupils' writing skills have improved in recent years and, while they still lag behind those in reading and mathematics, the gap is closing. Due to closely-targeted support and small-group activities, most pupils who are new to speaking English and those with special educational needs and categorised as at school action, make good progress from their starting points. This is helping to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of pupils nationally. Their progress is better than that made by a small minority of more-able pupils. This is because in some lessons the tasks set for more-able pupils are not challenging enough. Pupils' attainment in reading by end of Year 2 is broadly average. Most pupils are enthusiastic readers and keen to share books with each other and with adults. Their developing knowledge of the links between letters and sounds is helping them decode those words with which they are unfamiliar. Older pupils happily complete book reviews and talk positively about their enjoyment of reading. They do so fluently, expressively and with good understanding of the meaning, contributing to their average attainment in reading by the time they leave Year 6.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good overall with some of it outstanding. Inspection findings confirm parents' and carers' positive views of teaching. Pupils' improving attendance is another good indicator of their positive attitudes to school. These good attitudes are evident in their response to the teaching. Pupils mostly settle very well in lessons, show interest and are confident to volunteer their thoughts or to admit when they do not fully understand something. They make good use of opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other and they thoroughly enjoy activities, such as being in the hot seat to answer others' questions. For example, in a Year 5 English class pupils volunteered to answer questions about the book they were reading. Through searching questions and well-considered answers all pupils were able to gain a deeper understanding of the characters and plot.

Teachers use humour well to make learning enjoyable and effectively separate lessons into different sections to help pupils sustain their focus. They consistently share the learning objective and success criteria with pupils so that they are clear about the purpose of the lesson. Teachers make good use of subject-specific language, interactive whiteboards and classroom display to help pupils consolidate their learning. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace but, in a small minority, teachers spend too long talking to the whole class as they set up the main activities without engaging every pupil. As a result, pupils have to wait to get started and this slows the pace of their learning. Teaching assistants provide discrete, good quality support. This enables those who find learning more difficult to make good progress alongside their peers. Teachers generally question pupils well to encourage their thinking but there are times when there is insufficient challenge for more-able pupils, especially in whole-group sessions.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults are skilled at moving among different groups of children engaged in self-selected play, helping to lead their learning forward. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils of all ages have targets to aim for in reading, writing and mathematics and most are clear about what they mean or what they need to do to reach them. Some marking is of good quality, giving clear indicators of what pupils need to concentrate on to improve their work, but this is not yet seen consistently across the school.

The well-organised and exciting curriculum has a positive impact on the teaching because it provides staff with a clear framework for planning lessons. It also contributes to the consistency of approach and high expectations for pupils' learning set in most lessons and observed by inspectors. This is exemplified by the structured way in which teaching actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, there is a culture found throughout the school which celebrates diversity, encourages collaboration and demonstrates a respect for the views of others.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The very large majority of pupils, parents and carers agrees that pupils feel safe in school and that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Most also consider that typically, behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Their views are accurate. In conversations with numerous pupils around the school, inspectors were told consistently that if 'anyone was unkind to them in any way' they were 'certain it would get 'sorted out'. Pupils generally behave safely, sensibly and form good relationships so that the school operates as a happy, cohesive community. The positive impact of recent enhancements to

the curriculum, aimed at promoting pupils' social and emotional development, is evident in the way that, for example, pupils volunteer as 'Buddies' to help others during break times.

There have been marked improvements over time in the behaviour of individuals and groups. Pupils are keen to share this information with inspectors and other adults, demonstrating a real pride in their school and recognising the important part they play in maintaining an orderly community. Those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those who belong to different minority ethnic groups are fully included in activities. They are among those who describe the school as 'joyful, friendly and happy because people are kind and respect you.'

Attendance is broadly average and improving. Robust new measures have been introduced that have had a direct impact on day-to-day attendance and punctuality. For example, first day absence telephone calls are routinely made and parents and carers of children who arrive late are encouraged to provide an explanation.

Leadership and management

School leaders have been successful in their drive to raise pupils' attainment and to accelerate their progress. There is no sense of complacency but a recognition that more needs to be achieved and a realistic development plan which sets out how this will happen. The governing body is well informed and has sufficient information to be able to hold the school to account for pupils' attainment and achievement. Governing body members visit regularly, are linked to different subjects and keep a very well-informed eye on matters related to finance, health and safety. They also ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are well promoted throughout the school.

The headteacher, other senior leaders and all staff share a very ambitious vision for the school and a determination that each pupil should achieve their full potential. There is an absolute commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Careful monitoring and accurate evaluation lead to actions that successfully remove barriers to learning for individual pupils. For example, the school's self-evaluation provides a detailed and accurate analysis of 2011 achievement for boys and girls, pupils with additional needs and those learning English as an additional language as well as other groups represented in the school. Consequently, at regular points during the academic year, the school is able to check that these different groups are doing as well as they should. Due to the headteacher's drive and ability to create a strong staff team, much effective work has been done and there is good capacity to improve. Following effective professional development for teachers, actions to raise pupils' attainment in writing are paying off with the large majority on track to meet their challenging targets. The introduction of systems to assess pupils' progress in lessons and on a regular basis, has led to significant improvement.

The curriculum is good overall. It is generally well planned, becoming more creative and enhancing pupils' enjoyment and eagerness to learn. Currently, there are too few occasions when pupils are able to apply their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects or topics. This limits pupils' opportunities to extend their writing skills or test out their problem-solving abilities. A real strength of the curriculum is the way in which it contributes successfully to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is good. For example, pupils are able to study their own and other cultures and learn to respect and appreciate the rich, cultural diversity found at Greenbank. Attractive displays of pupils' work

throughout the school provide good evidence of pupils studying a range of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds.

As well as the main curriculum, pupils greatly enjoy learning German which is taught to all age groups, the residential experiences and other visits, visitors and numerous after-school activities, such as the band club, that bring their learning to life. The pre-school breakfast- and after-school clubs ensure that pupils get off to a good start to the day within a well-organised and supportive environment and can relax at the end of the day in comfortable surroundings. With its inclusive atmosphere and improvements in the rate of pupils' progress, it is understandable that parents and carers describe this as a school where, 'every child is treated as an individual and valued'.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenbank Primary School, Liverpool, L18 1JB

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you and are particularly grateful to those of you who spoke with us, helping us to understand what it is like to be a pupil at Greenbank.

You go to a good school where, as you told us, the adults take good care of you and help you to enjoy learning. Your attendance and punctuality are improving and you behave well so that you make good friends and feel happy at school. You also told us that you feel safe and have good ideas about how to keep yourselves safe. You make good progress in your learning so that by the end of Year 6 you are working at average levels. Throughout the school, your reading skills are improving quickly. Those of you who find learning more difficult also achieve well because the adults provide you with good-quality support. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have great fun as they learn and are well prepared to move to Year 1.

Your teachers organise interesting things for you to do and adapt them to suit your different needs, but we have asked them to make sure that they provide enough challenge for those of you who find learning easier than most and give you all a chance to practise your literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects. We have also asked some of them to give you clearer guidance about how to improve your work when they mark your books. We know that the school has changed quite a lot over recent years and this means that many of you, particularly older pupils, are making better progress than you have in the past. You can help by listening carefully in class and trying your very best in all subjects. This letter comes with our very best wishes for the future. We hope that you continue to enjoy learning, especially reading, as much as you do now!

Yours sincerely,

Michael Hewlett
Lead Inspector

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