

Great Chart Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118375
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358329
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Gavin Jones

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Peirson-Webber
Headteacher	Isobel Duncalfe
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons. All 14 class teachers, present during the inspection, were seen at least once. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, including playtime and assembly, and looked at planning, monitoring, assessment data, a range of school policies, the governing body minutes and a range of pupils' work. They analysed 155 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 100 from pupils and 27 from members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The reasons for attainment not being higher by the end of Year 2.
- The accuracy of the school's own judgements concerning the quality of teaching, exploring possible variations across the school.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels, in relation to monitoring and driving improvement.
- The extent to which pupils understand ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in British society.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school, currently oversubscribed. Pupils are largely from White British heritage. Recently the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has gradually increased but is still well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, with very low numbers of pupils with statements for those needs. The main areas of need centre on speech, language and behaviour. The number of pupils believed to be eligible for free school meals is low. Children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage do so in two Reception classes. The school has a wide range of awards for elements of the curriculum and for supporting healthy lifestyles.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Great Chart is a good and effective school. It has continued to improve and now has a range of strengths. The drive for this improvement has come from the high quality teamwork of the senior leadership team, led exceptionally well by the headteacher, and the very positive ways in which the rest of the school's staff team have taken on the challenge of working towards becoming an outstanding school. This vision is one to which all subscribe. The school has not only sustained its good features, noted at the previous inspection, but now has outstanding features in the way pupils feel safe in school, their attitudes to a healthy lifestyle, the vibrant curriculum, the ways in which the school safeguards and cares for its pupils and the partnership with parents. Attainment in English and mathematics, by the end of Year 6, is above average. Although progress by the end of Year 2 in mathematics is satisfactory and progress in writing by the end of Year 6 is at expected levels for the more able pupils, the school has moved rapidly to put a good range of measures in place to secure improvement. Accurate and regular evaluations of these measures are not yet giving the school enough valuable information on the progress made in these matters. In spite of teaching being good overall and the use teachers make of assessment data being good, there is some inconsistency in the way in which marking is carried out across the school. Some examples of the very best practice were noted in a small number of classes but in others, there were elements of practice that do not show a consistency of approach. This, in some cases, has a negative effect on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. For example, as pupils do not always show their 'working out' in their books, it is not possible for teachers to see where pupils have made their mistakes in calculations.

Part of the school's success is related to the excellent quality of the curriculum, which is broad, shows very clear links between subjects, is extremely well enriched by many opportunities for first-hand learning to take place and evidently interests pupils to a very high level. Parents and carers give great support to their children at school and the school works extremely well in partnership with them to make best use of their involvement. This starts in Reception and is maintained through a wide variety of links over the whole period their children attend. The high levels of attendance, at 97%, are testament to this relationship.

The governing body is very involved in supporting the school. It gathers a good deal of information itself, in order that it might understand how well the school is doing and to improve its ability to hold the school to account for its actions. Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring that every child in their care has an equal chance of success. The school regularly checks its own progress through well-tuned monitoring and evaluation exercises which are transparent and accurate. This gives them a clear picture of where the school should go next. It has already made good progress since the last inspection and is on track to sustain this improvement even further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics by Year 2 and writing by Year 6 for more-able pupils by:
 - monitoring, evaluating and revising existing interventions and strategies already in place, in order to confirm their impact.
- Improve consistency in marking by:
 - making better use of examples of best practice within the school
 - ensuring that the next steps pupils should take in their learning are more regularly shown
 - encouraging pupils to show their working in mathematics so that teachers can make more pertinent comments about processes and skills in their marking
 - encouraging the use of a marking 'conversation' for pupils to respond to comments made by their teachers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the school with understanding and skills generally in line with those expected for their age. Across the school pupils show a high level of enjoyment in their learning. Pupils were constantly challenged; in a Year 6 lesson where they were engaged in writing a letter as an evacuee, pupils thrived on their discussions and writing. Pupils' excellent behaviour is a strong feature of their personal development and has a very positive effect on progress in their learning. Behaviour was hardly ever less than outstanding. In lessons, almost all pupils make good progress in their learning. This was also the case for pupils with special educational needs. Although pupils at Year 2 made less progress in mathematics than the school had expected, a range of strategies has been put in place to support better progress. In the same way, the school has been very quick to put in additional support, with needs highlighted by its good assessment procedures, so that through the ability groups it has initiated in English, specific strategies are used to help more-able pupils make better progress in their writing. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are making good progress. Some of these strategies are at an early stage and not yet evaluated. This is seen against a background of attainment already being above average by Year 6. Through a range of good support initiatives, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress as their classmates.

In discussions, all pupils said that they felt very safe in school and they knew who they could turn to for support. Parents and carers also attest to the quality of care and the ways that their children are looked after. There is a high level of interest from pupils in maintaining healthy lifestyles. They are knowledgeable and take advantage of the many sporting and health related activities provided by the school. Pupils take on many responsibilities around the school including the school council and are involved with the local history society and other local groups. The high level of attendance gives good support to pupils' gaining a clear understanding of expectations in the workplace. Their basic skill levels are good and they work well in groups and teams. They have events such as My Future where they are able to explore a range of adult occupations. As a result of a wide range of support, the extent of pupils' moral, social and cultural development is

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excellent. This is noted in the way they relate to each other and adults, their enjoyment in all things artistic and their understanding and acceptance of the beliefs of others. Their spiritual development is equally high and is supported by daily acts of worship which always give pupils opportunities to reflect on their lives and those of other people.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Because the school has a range of very well-qualified additional adults involved in supporting pupils, it is able to respond quickly and with exceptional skill to the needs of all pupils. It comprehensively provides high quality care, guidance and support for pupils including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, other vulnerable groups and those recently bereaved. Pupils are known as individuals and their needs are addressed on an individual basis. Case studies exemplify the successes of the school's provision. The close liaison with families lends extra strength to the processes. Outside agencies are brought in when necessary, although outstanding practice is embedded at all levels in the school.

Teaching consistently engages and motivates pupils to want to learn. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons. A Year 1 class was enthralled by the teacher's account of shopping with her teddy bear to illustrate narrative writing. Again, the strong subject knowledge shown by Year 6 teachers in their topic on the 1940's, provided pupils with high quality information upon which to base exceptionally empathetic writing. Their performance in

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their 40's Tea Dance, led by a member of the Land Army and the dancing expertise of a teaching assistant, was of almost equal quality! Where teaching assistants are well deployed they add much to pupils' learning, for example in the small group receiving additional mathematics support undertaken by teaching assistants in Year 6 and 3. Teachers make informed and carefully moderated assessments and make good use of assessment data in their grouping of pupils by ability in both mathematics and English, for example. However, the quality of assessment in marking is not consistent. Some exceptionally good practice is noted, but equally there is too wide a range of practice seen. Good practice is noted much more widely in the use that teachers make of the data they collect on pupils' progress.

The curriculum is outstanding, providing pupils with rich and memorable experiences and meeting all of their needs. A very wide range of visits and visitors adds many high quality first-hand experiences to learning. These are noted in the quality and variety of displays in the school, many of which show the ways in which the school links subjects together, often linked through literacy or information and communication technology.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good and effective at all levels. They are particularly so at the highest level, with the senior leadership team setting clear strategies for the school's further progress, having ensured that since the last inspection good progress has been made. Middle leaders too play their part well, in spite of some of them being quite new to their roles. The leadership of the headteacher has been crucial in galvanising the team into corporate and successful action. To this end, the school's improved use of data and assessment has provided it with a wide range of information upon which to base further improvements. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent and has engendered good progress and innovation since the last inspection in a number of areas. The management of teaching and learning is good and is evidenced in the greater consistency of good teaching. The school has an effective range of partnerships, not least the excellent relations it has with parents and carers, and it uses these relationships well to support learning and improve progress. Parents and carers themselves are universally pleased with the school and how it provides for their children. Almost all parents and carers feel that the school shows great care for their children, brought about by the high quality of its safeguarding and care. Its records of adults working at the school are very well maintained and the environs of the school are safe and secure. Its child protection systems are of the highest quality as are the risk assessments and first-aid qualifications. The work of the governing body is good. It is well informed about the school's strengths

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and weaknesses, and is now increasingly more able to use this information to support the school in improving. Tracking of progress, an issue at the last inspection, is carried out very effectively and allows the school to note the performances of a range of vulnerable groups. This ensures that all pupils are treated fairly and have equality of opportunity. The school is a strong cohesive community and this has a good impact on pupils' personal development, their interest in the community beyond their school gates and their interest in multicultural matters.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

While children's skills and understanding on entry fluctuate from year to year, the pattern is that these skills are in line with those expected for their age. However, their language and communication skills and elements of their personal development are often slightly lower. The secure foundations laid here, for future learning, ensure that they make good progress in both their learning and personal development in the Reception classes, with almost all reaching nationally expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. A small proportion exceeds those levels in counting, linking letters with sounds and social development, for example. The experienced team of practitioners embraces Early Years Foundation Stage good practice and is extremely well led. Improvements have been made in transition, links with parents and carers and pre-school providers and in the provision of parent workshops and information sessions. Staff create meaningful opportunities for children to make choices in their learning, and when appropriate, teach skills and knowledge directly, as in a lesson on number recognition or again in a lesson on Hanukkah. Links with both the pre-school settings and with parents and carers are very effective. Parents are involved in creating books about their families and are particularly engaged in the innovative 'My Unique Story' books started last year. Planning is carried out carefully and assessments are made at very regular intervals and supported by a

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range of photographic evidence of progress made. The whole setting encourages children to move freely from one space to another with children from both classes sharing the good resources and spacious area well. Although the outside area was covered in snow, it was still being used to support children's learning well. Safeguarding is of a high quality and parents and carers confirm that they feel their children are not only safe but exceptionally well cared for. The school is now looking at ways to improve children's reading and writing to bring them in line with other areas of good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of comments on the questionnaires were positive and reflected the high level of satisfaction shown by parents and carers in the work of the school. Over 97% of respondents agreed that their children enjoyed school, were kept safe, made enough progress, that teaching was good, that children were helped to have a healthy lifestyle and were overall happy with their children's experience at this well-led and managed school. A very small minority felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Discussions with pupils, reference to the school's log of behavioural incidents, pupils' exemplary behaviour in the large majority of lessons and while out at play, indicated that behaviour was excellent. Two or three parents and carers made written comments on a lack of time spent on physical activities. The inspection team checked timetables, looked at the wide range of sporting activities offered as clubs or inter-school competitions and felt that this was at least as much as most schools would offer.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Chart Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 155 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 425 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	114	74	36	23	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	120	77	34	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	90	58	59	38	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	91	59	60	39	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	104	67	48	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	88	57	60	39	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	91	59	60	39	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	76	49	68	44	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	90	58	59	38	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	76	49	61	39	7	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	43	73	47	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	91	59	60	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	107	69	45	29	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



2 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Chart Primary School, Ashford TN23 5LB

You may remember that four inspectors came to your school very recently. Thank you for making us all feel so welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and I am writing to tell you what we found out.

You go to a good school which takes particularly good care of you and provides you with a good education.

- You make good progress in your work and by the end of Year 6 your attainment is good.
- You are looked after extremely well and this makes you feel very safe.
- You get excellent care, guidance and support.
- Your understanding of healthy lifestyles, your behaviour and your spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are all excellent.
- The school's curriculum is exciting and makes you want to learn
- Your parents and carers work very closely with the school to help in your education.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent.

We have asked the school to do two things to help it improve even further.

- Improve the progress you make in mathematics by Year 2 and in writing by Year 6, by making sure that what are planned as improvements work well.
- Make sure that all teachers mark your work well and tell you how you can improve.

All of you can help by continuing to come to school as regularly as you do and by responding to suggestions that teachers make on how you might improve your work, especially in English and mathematics lessons.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones

Lead inspector

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