

Great Leighs Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114852
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357637
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Hancock
Headteacher	Richard Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
School address	Aragon Road Great Leighs, Chelmsford CM3 1RP
Telephone number	01245 361254
Fax number	01245 361004
Email address	admin@greatleighs.essex.sch.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Inspection number	357637

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 19 lessons or part lessons taught by 11 different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils. Informal conversations were held with parents and carers. The inspectors analysed 105 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and other questionnaires by pupils and staff.

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

- Inspectors investigated the school's strategies to improve the performance of boys in Key Stage 1.
- They examined how well pupils are progressing in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors investigated the factors contributing to pupils' improvements in writing.
- They evaluated the pace of learning in lessons and how well teachers matched tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs.
- The inspection team investigated how well leaders and managers at all levels evaluate the work of the school and take effective action to bring about improvements.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average size primary school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and there are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. There have been considerable changes to staffing since the last inspection. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools and Active Mark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Great Leighs is an improving school. It offers a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are some good aspects to its work. Good care, guidance and support contribute well to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn together in a safe and welcoming learning environment. Behaviour is usually good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They make valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community. Attendance levels have improved since the last inspection and are above average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but this is improving because of the positive action taken by the school.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Provision is satisfactory but there are some weaknesses in planning. At times, activities are over-directed by adults and there are insufficient opportunities for children to explore and learn independently. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress but there are variations in their performance. Effective measures have been taken to tackle past underachievement in mathematics. Investigative and problem-solving work has been increased. There are good examples of this approach but it is not consistent in all classes. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in this subject and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. A range of strategies have successfully been introduced to improve pupils' performance in English, particularly in writing. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in English and attainment is above average by the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching is improving but practice is not consistent enough to promote good progress in all classes. In the most successful lessons, pupils know what they expected to learn because the purpose is effectively shared with the class. Pupils are challenged well and learning maintains a brisk pace. In other lessons, tasks are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs, and learning declines. Learning also slows down in some lessons because time is not maximised. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities. There are good partnerships with other agencies to support pupils' learning.

The headteacher with his staff successfully promotes good care and positive personal outcomes for pupils. He and the new key leaders are well focused on raising pupils' achievement and improving the consistency of teaching. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic. The findings of evaluation are used well to inform improvement planning. There have been recent improvements to pupils' attainment and progress in both English and mathematics.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 to above-average levels by extending the good examples of investigative and problem-solving work.
- Remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning so that most lessons are good or better before the end of December 2011, by ensuring that in all lessons:
 - the purpose is sharply focused and shared with the class
 - assessment is used effectively to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' different abilities
 - learning time is maximised and the lesson moves at a brisk pace.
- By December 2011, improve planning and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills broadly those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. Pupils enjoy their experiences at school and most show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often exemplary in Years 5 and 6. Pupils told the inspectors, 'There are lots of fun activities' and Year 2 pupil remarked, 'Castles is an exciting topic'.

Girls are performing better than the boys in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading and writing. This gender difference is more pronounced than the national picture. Different approaches to inspire boys are being introduced to bridge this gap and there are signs that boys are making better progress in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is average in mathematics and above average in English. Pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities make similar progress to other groups.

By Year 6, pupils are articulate and confident speakers. In most classes there are good opportunities for them to discuss their learning in pairs or small groups. For example, in a good Year 6 history lesson, pupils had good opportunities to discuss the World War II poster, 'Dig for Victory' and an old cinema clip on the same topic. They shared their views and suggested how best to persuade people to grow their own food. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 in English. The range of writing opportunities provided has been increased. Pupils write for a range of audiences and use different styles. They are applying and developing their writing skills in different subjects.

Previous national data indicate that pupils were making inadequate progress in mathematics but positive action has been taken to tackle this. Pupils have more opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to solve problems. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils made good progress in solving time problems because interesting learning resources were used and activities were well matched to needs. Progress in other classes is sometimes hindered because tasks are not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able.

Pupils make good progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In an uplifting assembly on light, pupils showed a clear appreciation of the magic of the sun rising in the morning and the light reflected by the moon. They reflected on how light

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

guides us and explored positive qualities such as acceptance, caring and forgiveness. Pupils are courteous, friendly and supportive of others. They adopt healthy lifestyles well by choosing healthy foods and taking part in a range of sporting activities. Pupils feel well cared for at school and know that there are always well known adults they can turn to if they need help. They willingly take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council. The school council has made good contributions to improving outdoor play equipment and facilities. Pupils support those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for a range of national and overseas charities. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their personal and social skills are well developed and they are making good progress in developing and applying literacy skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

There are examples of good and even outstanding teaching but inconsistencies in practice mean that pupils' progress varies between classes and between subjects. Pupils know what they are to learn when teachers effectively share the learning intentions with them, but lessons can lack a clear purpose when this does not happen. Teachers' explanations and instructions are usually clear and informative. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding of new learning. In some lessons, activities and tasks are not sufficiently well tailored to pupils' needs because assessment information is not used well enough to plan teaching. Teaching assistants provide clear guidance and support for

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

pupils who need extra help. Opportunities for pupils to assess and review their own learning have been increased.

A broad and balanced curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. Effective action has been taken to improve provision in English, particularly writing, and measures to improve provision in mathematics are developing. The teaching of French makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural and language development. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the additional clubs on offer including dance, gardening, gymnastics, netball, photography and tag rugby. Health education and the good range of physical activities contribute well to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Interesting visits are provided to enhance pupils' learning and development including residential trips for Years 5 and Year 6. These offer new outdoor experiences and help to build team and social skills.

The school provides a well organised and safe environment for its pupils. The good care, guidance and support are much appreciated by parents and pupils. Typical parent comments were, 'The school has a caring and warm atmosphere and involves parents well' and 'There is very safe and happy environment'. Adults in the school know the pupils well and establish good relationships with them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the support they need. The school works effectively with other agencies in supporting pupils and their families needing additional help. Good attendance is successfully monitored and promoted.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The established headteacher is well regarded by parents and carers, especially for his approachability and his knowledge of the pupils. With the staff, he has successfully promoted good care and positive personal outcomes for pupils. Teaching and pupils' academic achievement have been less consistent but these priorities are being tackled. . There is a clear vision and a firm ambition shared by the headteacher, the governing body and most of the staff to move the school from satisfactory to good. The actions taken by the new leadership team are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The new leaders of English and mathematics lead by example in their classroom practice. Teaching is effectively monitored by senior staff and the local authority. While teaching is improving, there are key elements of teaching to be strengthened in some classes.

Members of the governing body are both supportive and challenging. They are well led by an enthusiastic Chair. Governors possess a range of expertise such as in financial management and this is used to the school's advantage. All statutory requirements are met and the governors are playing an active part driving improvement. Good emphasis is

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

placed on safeguarding. Policies and procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are clear and effective. The monitoring and evaluation of procedures by the governors are detailed and thorough. Staff are well trained in safeguarding, and safe practices are promoted effectively through the school's curriculum.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily and discrimination is tackled very well. However, equality of opportunity in the school is not better than satisfactory because inconsistencies in teaching mean that not all pupils have equal access to good provision. Leaders and members of the governing body have a good understanding of the local community it serves and promotes community cohesion well. Pupils participate well in a range of local community events. A partnership with a primary school in Uganda is developing well and increases pupils' understanding of life in the wider global community. There are well considered plans to establish a partnership with a school closer to home to increase pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Leadership and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children settle well into the school because of good induction arrangements and the positive partnerships with parents and carers. Adults establish good relationships with the children and give good attention to their care and welfare. Children make good progress in their personal and social development. They relate positively to others, share learning materials and behave well.

Children enjoy their learning and activities provided. Teaching is satisfactory and as a result, children are making satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Assessment and record keeping are satisfactory but assessment information is not always used effectively to plan

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

and modify learning activities to meet the needs of different children. At times, learning activities are over-directed by adults and there are insufficient opportunities for children to explore and learn independently. Role-play areas to promote creativity and language development are limited and do not reflect the current topic. Areas to foster a love of books and provide opportunities for children to acquire and practise early writing skills lack prominence in the setting. Outdoor learning equipment and facilities have improved since the last inspection but these are underused. Outdoor activities are not sufficiently linked to the main topic of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just over a half of parents and carers returned the questionnaire and this is a higher proportion than is usually found. Most of the parents and carers who returned them are happy with their children's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with the safety in the school, their children's enjoyment, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the approachability of the headteacher. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about the quality of teaching, how well they are kept informed about their children's progress, the meeting of children's particular needs and how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings are that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and tasks provided are not always meeting pupils' needs. The school has the typical procedures for informing parents and carers about their children's progress. Pupils are usually well behaved and there are effective strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Leighs 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	64	34	32	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	75	71	28	27	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	54	36	34	7	7	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	43	50	48	6	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	54	52	37	36	9	9	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	51	41	39	5	5	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	62	38	36	2	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)	43	41	51	49	3	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	44	47	45	8	8	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	50	42	40	5	5	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	51	42	40	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	66	63	31	30	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	60	36	34	3	3	3	3

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Great Leighs Primary School, Chelmsford, CM3 1RP

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Your school provides a satisfactory level of education, with some areas which are good. The school's main strengths are as follows.

You really enjoy school and your attendance is above average.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in English and standards are above average by the end of Year 6.

A good range of additional activities is offered including clubs and visits.

You get on well with each other and behaviour is good.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.

You told us you feel safe at school because staff take good care of you and provide good guidance and support.

You make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do the following things to improve areas of the school's work.

Make sure you do plenty of investigations in mathematics.

Some of you could be making better progress in lessons. We have asked the teachers to share the purpose of the lesson at the start, to match the work more carefully to your abilities and ensure that the lesson moves along more quickly.

Improve planning and the range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so children can make good progress in all areas of learning.

You can all help by continuing to work hard, particularly in mathematics. We wish you success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.