

Greenmeadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126251
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	360027
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Kirk

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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Lines
Headteacher	Diane Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed, taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of meetings, policies, safeguarding documents and teachers' planning. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils as well as 68 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The quality of learning and progress for pupils in mathematics throughout the school.
- The effectiveness of teaching in the mixed-age classes, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who are more able.
- How well assessments of pupils' achievements, including feedback through marking, are shared with them in order to support improvements.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation in order to secure improvements.

Information about the school

Greenmeadow is an average-sized school, drawing its pupils from an urban area. The majority of pupils are White British with about 7% from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught either in a Reception class or a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. There is a Children's Centre on the same site, which was not part of this inspection. The school holds the Activemark, the intermediate International Award and the Basic Skills Award.

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

3

Main findings

Greenmeadow Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Although attainment has fallen to average since the last inspection, partly due to the high turbulence of staff in this period, the decline is being addressed now as the staffing is stable again. The senior management team recognises that there has been some inadequate progress in the past and has put in place systems to improve and monitor teaching and progress, especially in writing and mathematics. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. However, leaders and managers have not used the full range of information to support their evaluations, resulting in gaps in knowledge about some of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has only recently started to use a more effective method for tracking and evaluating pupils' progress and it has not yet extended this evaluation to include groups of pupils, for example to check if there are any differences in the progress made by boys and girls. As a result, capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Most children achieve satisfactorily through the school. They make a positive start to their schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where welfare is good. However, there are inconsistencies in the teaching and progress made by some of these pupils, resulting in satisfactory outcomes overall. The school has not been analysing its data from the Early Years Foundation Stage sufficiently well to identify and improve areas of weakness. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, making better progress in English than in mathematics as a result of a whole-school initiative in writing. The school has started to improve progress in mathematics, identifying weaknesses in pupils' basic calculation skills in Years 1 to 5, but this has not had sufficient time yet to have an impact on attainment, which is broadly average when they leave.

Some teaching is good, but in other lessons where teaching is satisfactory, there is too much focus on grammar and punctuation at the expense of content and style in pupils' writing. At times, teachers do not check that pupils fully understand a task early enough in a lesson, or ensure that the lesson has been sufficiently well planned. Feedback to pupils in writing is also too heavily focused on grammar and punctuation, and the school is using too many differing methods of feedback and evaluation with pupils, thus reducing their understanding of exactly what they need to improve next. Good systems of support, especially for vulnerable pupils, are in place. As a result, pupils feel safe and are well cared for by all staff. All subjects are securely taught in the broad curriculum.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics by setting clear targets for pupils' rates of progress and ensuring these are monitored regularly.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good by:
 - sharing good practice more effectively
 - simplifying marking and feedback systems in writing and ensuring that these are based on appropriate learning objectives for lessons and not just on grammar and punctuation.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems by:
 - ensuring that monitoring uses the full range of information to gain an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for improvement and that these are shared with all leaders and managers.
 - providing leaders and managers with effective pupil tracking information that will support their effectiveness, including information about the achievement of groups of pupils
 - establishing a more effective focus on evaluating outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to improve consistency.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children usually enter the Reception classes with skills that are similar to those expected for most four-year-olds, although this varies from year to year. Assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2010 showed that attainment in English had risen compared to recent years and was better than mathematics. This was as a result of a successful school focus on writing. There is some evidence of accelerated progress in mathematics due to interventions, but this has not yet had an impact throughout the school, despite some good mathematics teaching being observed. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on finding percentages, the teacher continually assessed pupils' learning in order to ensure that all the work they undertook in the lesson was sufficiently challenging to ensure at least good progress. In another example of successful learning, an effective investigation of the addition, subtraction and multiplication of odd and even numbers, carried out by Year 3/4 pupils in a mathematics lesson, resulted in a number of pupils having a thorough understanding of the rules as a result of their investigations. However, it was also clear during observations and when scrutinising tracking information that there are weaknesses in pupils' basic mathematical skills. There is some variability of progress across the school, although this is lessening. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress along with their peers.

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning as reflected in above average levels of attendance. Their good behaviour is seen in their good manners and in how well they relate to each other and to the staff. Social and moral development is good so pupils have a good understanding of the consequences of their actions. However, their spiritual and cultural development is shown to be satisfactory. Pupils show a limited understanding of the wide range of religious and cultural influences which they have experienced, although they do have some understanding of sharing common values with

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others. Pupils are keen to participate in the wide range of activities offered in lessons and are responsive and hard-working. They say that they are well cared for and can outline the ways in which the school has helped them to adopt healthy lifestyles as a result of their healthy eating lessons and the wide range of sporting opportunities which many can access. There is an active School Council and Year 6 playground leaders are particularly proud that they help to promote good play and help to resolve any difficulties which younger children may have in the playground.

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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

A number of good lessons were observed during the inspection, mainly taught by senior staff. Teaching has some strengths, for example checking pupils' learning during main teaching sessions and preparing activities that pupils find enjoyable and stimulating. Most teachers ensure that they meet the needs of the mixed-age pupils in their class well. The decision taken by the school to allocate pupils to the mixed-age classes based on their writing ability has generally ensured that more-able pupils are well challenged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have effective support. Pupils who show a particular strength in mathematics have the opportunity to join the higher class for their mathematics lessons. Teaching assistants are well briefed and support individuals and groups of pupils well. A scrutiny of pupils' English books in Years 3 to 6 indicated that learning objectives, individual pupil targets and feedback from lessons were almost

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exclusively focused on grammar and punctuation. At times, planning in literacy is not in sufficient depth or over a sufficiently long period of time for pupils to gain a full understanding of a particular genre or area of study.

Out-of-school activities are a strong aspect of provision including sport, music and drama. However, much of the non-core subject work which pupils are engaged in is at times limited and literacy and numeracy skills are not well developed within the broad curriculum. Staff take care of pupils adequately, but the school's systems of care, guidance and support are not always effective in identifying those pupils who may need extra help or who might be experiencing learning or other difficulties. The school has recently identified this problem and is beginning to take steps to address it.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and the governing body share a strong drive to improve the school. However, challenges in staffing stability since the last inspection have resulted in some shortfalls in monitoring, evaluation and review systems, particularly relating to the curriculum and to pupils' academic performance. Therefore, historically, there has been some pupil underperformance and some pupils are still at risk of underachieving. New strategies put in place in mathematics to address this issue show some accelerated progress, but are too recent to impact on attainment across the school. The school has evidence of success with their previous writing focus. The governing body is satisfactory in its effectiveness, although some more experienced governors work well in supporting and challenging senior leaders, especially in relation to academic achievement. The school promotes equalities and tackles discrimination to a satisfactory level, although its work on monitoring and evaluating the progress of groups of pupils has begun only recently.

The school's safeguarding procedures are robust and parents and carers are happy with the way their children are kept safe at school. The school shares some of its good practice in safeguarding effectively with other schools. Engagement with parents and carers has been limited since the last inspection and the school is aware that it needs to find ways of encouraging them to take up opportunities to engage with school events and to elicit their views on a wide range of issues. The school has good relationships with local groups and schools and is aware of the need to further develop pupils' understanding of those living in contexts which are different to their own, for example through links with other children or schools in the United Kingdom and with schools overseas.

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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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A significant minority of the children currently in the Reception classes entered with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding that are below those typically expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress to achieve broadly average levels by the end of the Reception Year, but differing provision in the two classes results in inconsistent outcomes. There are good relationships between children and staff, and behaviour and safety are good. The school has a good system of induction for all new children and their parents and carers, which helps them to settle quickly and helps parents and carers to support their child well. When teaching and learning are good, planning is skilfully adapted to children's needs, and there is interactive and paced learning presenting a high level of challenge for all children. Careful observations and assessments are undertaken to ensure all learning needs are effectively catered for. When learning is less effective, planning lacks a focus on the skills to be learnt, valuable learning time is sometimes wasted and assessment is not sufficiently accurate to aid future planning. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but there is not yet sufficient use made of the available data to help identify areas for improvement.

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	3

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Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that their child enjoys school and that the school keep their child safe. A few parents and carers were unhappy that the questionnaire had been sent out only the day prior to the inspection, although the accompanying letter had been dated the previous day. The school acknowledged that they should have sent the letters a day earlier. Written responses included on forms from parents and carers indicated more negative than positive comments, although there were not any common themes. Concerns included a dissatisfaction with the turnover of staff and with the communication from the school. A small minority of parents and carers did not feel that the school helped them support their child sufficiently well or took account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that the school was only using a limited range of methods to engage with parents and carers. There were a number of negative comments about the cleanliness of the school, but the inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenmeadow 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	34	43	63	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	51	30	44	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	22	41	60	11	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	29	35	51	9	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	19	28	41	60	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	26	34	50	14	21	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	19	48	71	5	7	2	3
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)	15	22	36	53	5	7	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	22	41	60	8	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	15	49	72	3	4	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	15	38	56	11	16	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	16	24	35	51	9	13	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	31	34	50	10	15	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	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.



14 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenmeadow Primary School, Swindon SN25 3LW

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. We were impressed with your good behaviour and how well you all get on with each other. You told us that the staff take good care of you and explained how the school helps you to be healthy by advising you about healthy eating and giving you lots of opportunities to take part in sport.

Greenmeadow is a satisfactory school where you reach average levels of attainment and make satisfactory progress. Children in the Reception classes settle in quickly because staff work hard to make them and their parents and carers welcome and understand what being a pupil at Greenmeadow is all about. Overall, most of you do better in English than in mathematics.

These are the things that we have asked the headteacher and the governors to do to improve your school.

- Improve achievement in mathematics by setting clear targets and making sure that they are carefully monitored.
- Improve teaching and learning by teachers sharing their good ideas with each other and by simplifying the marking and guidance that you have to help your writing. We also asked them to make sure that these are not based just on grammar and punctuation but other aspects of writing.
- Strengthen their systems for checking on how well things are working in the school by looking at books, observing lessons and analysing teachers' planning and your assessment results. We also asked them to use the information that they collect about how well you are doing in each subject to calculate how well the whole school, including those in Reception classes, are doing.

All of you can help, too, by trying hard to achieve your targets in mathematics, for example, so that you know all your number bonds and times tables.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk

Lead inspector

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