

Greenfields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117193
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358104
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Hible
Headteacher	Helen Cook
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors, who visited 20 lessons taught by nine teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 88 pupils, 23 staff and from 189 parents and carers.

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

- How well have teaching, the curriculum and support arrangements been adapted to meet the learning needs of pupils of all abilities, including the more able?
- Why have boys done less well than girls in writing?
- What impact have leaders and the governing body had on improving provision and raising attainment?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. Most pupils are White British, with small numbers coming from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception Year class and a mornings-only Nursery class. Greenfields has Healthy Schools status.

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

Greenfields provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has succeeded in creating a positive climate for learning where pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. It is popular with parents and carers, who especially value the good start their children get off to in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the good arrangements for ensuring their children's welfare. Pupils, in turn, feel safe and they know a great deal about how to keep safe, including when cycling and using the internet. Pupils get on well together and they relish the many opportunities they have to take on responsibilities within the school community.

Although unvalidated initial test results show a drop this year, attainment has otherwise been average, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' broadly average starting points. Girls have generally done better than boys in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in line with their peers, but the progress of more-able pupils is slower than it should be. This is because teachers do not all make enough use of assessment information to plan and deliver lessons which enable each pupil to build on what they have already learnt. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, the pace of learning is not always as fast as it could be. This is particularly the case in lessons where teachers' introductions go on for too long. Where this occurs, it limits the time available for practical activities and writing tasks. It also results in the loss of attention of some pupils, mostly boys. It is this sometime loss of focus of some pupils in lessons that means learning behaviour is judged satisfactory even though pupils' conduct around the school is good. There has been a commendable emphasis in Key Stages 1 and 2 on showing pupils what is needed to achieve the next National Curriculum level. This is giving pupils a clearer idea of how well they are doing and of how to improve. However, the information given to pupils through marking varies in quality. Often, when teachers pose questions to pupils in their marking, these go unanswered.

Topics bring different subjects together and help to make learning interesting and fun, but they have not had much impact on raising standards of literacy and numeracy. One of the reasons for this is that subject leaders have had only limited involvement in monitoring lessons and other aspects of provision, such as checking on pupil outcomes and identifying precisely what changes need to be made to accelerate progress. Nonetheless, the school shows it has satisfactory capacity to improve because the headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate view of its strengths and of where improvements are needed. However, their lesson observations do not always focus sharply enough on how well pupils of all abilities are progressing. Teachers are given helpful pointers to help them improve their practice, but leaders do not systematically follow-up their observations in order to check that appropriate changes have been made. The governing body is supportive of the school but it has not done enough to challenge leaders over attainment and progress. In part,

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this is because the school development plan lacks measurable success criteria, limiting its effectiveness as a management tool for driving improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the spring term 2012, raise attainment, especially in writing, and accelerate progress in lessons by:
 - always setting work that helps pupils of all abilities, including the more able, to build on what they know and which extends their learning
 - reducing the amount of time that pupils are expected to listen passively to the teacher and giving boys and girls the opportunity to more quickly get on with writing and practical activities
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and apply their literacy and writing skills in subjects other than English.
- By the start of the spring term 2012, improve the effectiveness of assessment by:
 - making full use of assessment information to plan and deliver work that is appropriately matched to pupils' different capabilities, particularly to challenge the more able
 - consistently giving all pupils clear guidance through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring that pupils have time to read and respond to the comments teachers make in their marking.
- By the start of the summer term 2012, increase the effectiveness of management arrangements by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders all actively monitor provision and pupil outcomes within their areas of responsibility
 - always focusing lesson observations on pupils' learning and rates of progress
 - systematically following up in subsequent observations the points for development identified by school leaders when they visit lessons
 - incorporating measurable criteria within the school development plan against which the governing body can gauge the school's success.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' average attendance and the standards they attain in key literacy and numeracy skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Although pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, more-able pupils make slower progress than they should. This has an impact in depressing overall attainment at the end of Year 6. In this year's end of Key Stage 2 tests, none of the pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English or mathematics. In lessons, more-able pupils make less progress than they should when work is pitched at too low a level. Even where teachers set different objectives for

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different ability levels, these are not always distinct enough. In an English lesson, for example, where pupils were writing sentences to develop their use of adjectives, the least able were asked to use 'wow' words, middle ability pupils had to use 'wow' words that were 'exciting', and the more able were tasked with using 'wow' words that were both 'exciting and appropriate'. There seemed little meaningful distinction between these supposedly different objectives.

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. They treat each other with kindness and respect, keenly accepting responsibilities, for example as peer mediators and 'song leaders' in music. In celebration assemblies, they share in the great pride taken by those who earn certificates in recognition of their effort and achievement. Pupils take a keen interest in the lives of others, and raise money for a range of national and international charities. Such activities contribute strongly to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious education contributes well to pupils' understanding of different belief systems but pupils' awareness of other ways of life in the United Kingdom and wider world is otherwise less well developed.

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
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?

Teachers know their classes well, and the good relationships throughout the school help to motivate pupils. When activities are varied, pupils show they are capable of working at a

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good pace and getting a lot done in lesson time, especially when teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. It is when lesson introductions go on for too long, or when teachers set their sights too low, that the pace of learning slows. In some lessons, teachers direct questions at those who are slower to volunteer rather than always taking answers from those who put their hands up. However, this is not consistent in all classes. Although teaching assistants provide often good quality interventions and support for individuals and groups identified as falling behind, their skills are sometimes underutilised during periods of whole-class teaching.

Good enrichment opportunities contribute to pupils' positive personal development. Specialist teaching in textiles has broadened pupils' range of experience, as have the opportunities to learn French in every year group. The curriculum is also enhanced through well-developed partnerships with local secondary schools and others. Creative links are made between different subjects but these have not had a measurable impact in raising attainment. An overreliance in some classes on unchallenging worksheets has limited opportunities for pupils, and particularly the more able, for writing at length in science and other subjects.

The school works closely with parents and carers to ensure good guidance and support that helps potentially vulnerable pupils to overcome barriers to their learning. There are good arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, including for those with chronic medical conditions. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and are confident that there are adults they can go to if they have any worries or concerns.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Parents and carers appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and staff. As one parent commented, 'The headteacher is always willing to make time to speak with parents and children about any concerns they might have.' The headteacher and assistant headteachers have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their vision for school improvement is communicated well to staff, who share in these aims, and to parents and carers. However, improvement has been slowed by a lack of rigour in checking that, when changes are agreed, these are consistently implemented. This is evident, for example, in the variability in marking between different classes. Subject leaders take a broad overview of their areas of responsibility but have not all been involved fully in leading their subjects. They do not routinely observe lessons or analyse performance data to identify what, precisely, staff need to focus on to raise attainment. The governing body is supportive but its members are overly dependent on

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the headteacher and staff for their understanding of how well pupils are doing. They are not all familiar with the comparative school performance data made available to governing bodies and the governing body has not set tight enough success criteria in the school development plan. It ensures, however, that the school fully meets statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding. Equal opportunities are satisfactorily promoted, although there remains a performance gap in writing between girls and boys. The school functions as a harmonious community and pupils take a keen interest in learning about different beliefs and ways of life. There are no active links, however, with schools in different social circumstances in other parts of the United Kingdom or with schools overseas.

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	3
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

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress across all areas of learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes. As a consequence, most children reach the nationally expected learning goals by the end of the Reception Year and a number now exceed these goals. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly marked. Children develop into happy, confident learners who work and play together amicably, share resources and clearly love coming to school. Adults have a well-developed understanding of how young children learn, and teaching is well matched to their needs. Just occasionally, whole-class teaching sessions are a little too long for some children. Otherwise, children benefit from well-focused sessions led by adults as well as frequent opportunities to make their own choices from a rich array of options set out for them both indoors and in the outside areas. Relationships between adults and children are very positive, and children benefit from good care and support. The provision is well led and managed, and this is shown in the strong teamwork and the high expectations staff have of what the children can achieve.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers was exceptionally high. Their views were overwhelmingly positive, but around one in eight expressed concerns over the management of behaviour. Inspectors saw conduct in lessons and around the school that was invariably good, although behaviour overall was judged satisfactory because attitudes to learning were not always as strong. Pupils' attention drifted when teachers' lesson introductions went on for too long.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenfields 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 189 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 220 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	137	72	49	26	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	126	67	61	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	93	49	88	47	8	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	98	52	82	43	8	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	101	53	82	43	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	93	49	91	48	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	54	82	43	4	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)	90	48	77	41	4	2	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	94	50	88	47	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	75	40	86	46	15	8	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	82	43	88	47	10	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	118	62	69	37	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	65	63	33	4	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



11 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenfields Primary School, Watford WD19 6QH

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school. Greenfields gives you a satisfactory education. Following a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers help you to make satisfactory progress, mostly to attain average standards by the end of Year 6. It looks like those of you currently in Year 6 have attained less well this year in the national tests.

We would like to see you all make faster progress, especially in writing. We would especially like to see higher attainment for those of you who find learning easy. With this in mind, we have suggested some ways in which teachers could stretch you more and give you more time for writing and practical activities. We have also suggested improvements to the feedback you get from marking. You can all help your teachers with this by always taking care to read the comments teachers write when they mark your work, and by doing your very best to follow their advice.

Because staff take good care of you, you feel safe at Greenfields. It was good to see so many of you taking on important responsibilities in school. We were also pleased to see how well you all get on together. You are mostly attentive in lessons, but this is not always the case, especially when you have a long wait before you can get on with practical tasks. You enjoy the topics, such as 'the Wild West' in Key Stage 2, but we have asked teachers to give you more opportunities to use your literacy and numeracy skills in topic work and science.

The headteacher and other staff know the school well and are keen to make it even better. We have suggested some further ways to help them with this.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit. We send you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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